

24 April

Taliban force-landed an Iranian aircraft loaded with sophisticated weapons at the Herat air base. According to the Taliban the plane is reported to have been carrying surface to air missiles for the Opposition.

26 April

Taliban fighter jets bombed a residential area of northern Takhar province and killed 13 people and wounded 18 others, all of them civilians, said an Opposition spokesman.

27 April

Taliban Opposition troops have achieved more gains in the central province of Bamyan. According to the report Opposition troops significantly advanced southwards from Kotal -e- Haji Gak in Bamyan to the province of "Maidan-Wardag" capturing "Seyah Sang". According to the report Opposition leaders have invited international human rights groups to investigate the alleged killings of the Opposition by Taliban in central Afghanistan.

28 April

Taliban fighter jets maintained an aerial bombardment of Opposition positions in central Afghanistan's Bamyan Province. According to the report the Taliban had rushed fresh troops from Kabul to flush out Wahdat forces and more than 800 fighters were engaged to the south of Bamyan city and a further 500 to the east.

MAY**4 May**

At least 25 Taliban, including their prominent commander Mulla Tahir, were killed and two others wounded during fighting for control of strategic Dare-Suf in Samangan Province in northern Afghanistan. A report said Opposition fighters have made territorial gains in Samangan, Kunduz and Takhar provinces in recent fighting.

8 May

Taliban bombed Central Bamyan killing four people and wounding 10 others. In a bid to recapture the city of Bamyan, Taliban troops also launched an attack on the north and south, said Mohammad Jowari, a spokesman of Hezb-e-Wahdat.

13 May

A senior military commander of the Taliban Opposition General Sayed Husain Anwari claimed that the alliance force has shot down a Taliban cargo plane near the central city of Bamyan.

15 May

Heavy fighting continued in Bamyan Province; the Taliban recaptured Bamyan city. Villages throughout central Bamyan Province were deserted as the Taliban troops swept through the area recapturing territory from the northern-based Opposition alliance. A report said Taliban soldiers in the area accused the Opposition Hezb-e-Wahadat of ordering villagers out of the area and sending them into hiding in the mountains.

21 May

Taliban crushed an Iranian-backed plot to create turmoil in the western stronghold of Herat, killing eight opponents and arresting 100 others. According to the report the Taliban in Herat carried out a "systematic purge" of Herat's Shia Muslims, killing 25 and injuring 75 others after sealing the border with Iran. Taliban information Minister Amir Khan Muttai in an interview with a Pakistani press reporter, the bodies of several of those killed were hung in the city of Herat as a warning to the others.

22 May

Two prominent Taliban commanders along with their 150 men defected to the Afghan Opposition alliance in Samangan Province. According to a spokesman of Harakat-i-Islami, Najib Tahmas, Taliban commanders Messrs Almoss and Khadem defected to the alliance in district Maqsood in Samangan Province.

22 May

Heavy fighting has been reported in the strategic valley of Dare-Suf in northern province of Samangan where both sides attacked each other with heavy artillery and aerial bombardment.

JUNE**1 June**

Taliban jets bombarded Taloqan, the provincial capital of north-western Takhar Province bordering Tajikistan, a senior Opposition official said. 14 civilians, including seven members from one family, were killed.

2 June

Opposition claimed that their forces had killed 35 Taliban and captured 15 others as POs in Samangan Province.

6 June

Opposition claimed that its forces have killed a prominent Taliban commander in Darre-Suf in Samangan Province. The Taliban Commander, Mullah Daoud, was killed in action.

9 June

Opposition forces repulsed a Taliban offensive on strategic Dare-Suf in northern Samangan Province. Spokesman for the Opposition Harakat-e-Islami, General Hussain Anwari, said over 50 Taliban troops were killed in the valley's most recent battle with another 40 made POWs.

10 June

Three soldiers, loyal to Ahmad Shah Masood were killed and several injured when Taliban jets attacked the Opposition military bases in Top Khana Chowni in Badakhshan Province.

28 June

Hundreds of villagers fled their homes as the Taliban and Opposition exchanged heavy artillery fire north of Kabul, Shakardara, killing at least two people and wounding two others.

JULY**3 July**

Opposition spokesman General Sayad Husain Anwari said that their troops had captured the town of Karkar in northern Baghlan Province.

4 July

Opposition carried out two offensives against the Taliban in Samangan and Balkh Provinces, seizing 16 villages from the Taliban. According to the report, the attacks were launched from Darra-e-Sauf in Aibak, capital of Samangan, south of Mazar-i-Sharif, resulting in the capture of nine villages. Report added that seven other villages were also captured in Balkh Province.

12 July

Taliban have been preparing to carry out a major assault on the Panjsher valley, the stronghold of Ahmad Shah Masood. According to the report, thousands of Pakistani militants and hundreds of Arab extremists have joined a huge build-up of mercenaries in Kabul, as transport planes from Pakistan land at Kabul airport, said an Opposition spokesman.

13 July

Opposition forces shot down a Taliban helicopter and repulsed attacks by the Taliban in the northern province of Samangan. According to the Opposition, four Taliban, including commanders, were killed along front-lines near Dare-Suf in Samangan.

18 July

The Opposition claimed gains in Ghor Province; capturing Shahrak and Taiwara districts. According to the report more than 200 Taliban fighters allegedly defected to the Opposition.

20 July

The Taliban and Opposition exchanged artillery fire across the front-lines east of Kabul; no casualties reported.

22 July

Heavy fighting continued between the Taliban and Opposition for the control of a pass in northern Samangan Province; around a dozen fighters from both sides were killed.

24 July

Taliban and Opposition fierce artillery fire near Shakardara and Bazadi village near Kabul, killing at least two civilians and wounding several others, a Taliban commander reported.

27 July

Eleven rockets struck Kabul airport; no casualties were reported.

27 July

The Opposition warned the Taliban authorities that any alleged Pakistani or Arab mercenaries captured by the Opposition would be treated as "criminals" and not "prisoners of war".

29 July

Taliban launched a major summer offensive on the Opposition alliance with artillery, aircraft and ground troops on three fronts Tagab, Koh-e-Safi and Bagram areas north of Kabul.

July 29

Taliban intensify offensive against forces of Ahmad Shah Masood north of Kabul. According to the report 130 people had been killed and the main city of Nejrab remained in Taliban hands. Fighting erupted at Koh-i-Safi and along the New Road, reported added.

AUGUST**12 August**

The Taliban launched a clean up operation in several districts of the Shamali plains north of Kabul. Based on a report, Taliban soldiers were conducting a house to house search looking for Opposition troops before they advanced any further. The Taliban troops were burning houses and levelling residences, gardens and farmlands or ordering residents to leave their houses.

17 August

Opposition claimed to have captured Asmar district in Kunar Province in eastern Afghanistan. According to the Opposition eighty Taliban soldiers were killed in an attack in the eastern Provinces of Kunar and Laghman.

19 August

Fighting raged in Laghman Province between the Taliban and Opposition forces. The Taliban assault was aimed at wresting control of the district of Dawlat Shahi from fighters loyal to Ahmad Shah Masood.

21 August

Heavy fighting was reported in Kunar and Laghman between the Taliban and Opposition forces. Both sides report conflict routinely and make conflicting claims that are difficult to verify because of the remoteness of the region, Reuters reported.

22 August

The Taliban claimed that the district of Dawlat Shahi, Laghman Province was retaken from the Opposition.

SEPTEMBER**1 September**

Opposition claimed gains in Jauzjan and Samangan provinces. According to the Opposition one of the Taliban commanders, Mawlawi Ismail, was killed in the fighting in Jauzjan Province, while large quantities of ammunition, armoured vehicles, and heavy weapons were captured.

4 September

Taliban jets carried out heavy bombing against the strategic Opposition Panjsher stronghold injuring five civilians.

3 September

Clashes between the Taliban and Opposition continued in northern Afghanistan in the Sangcharak area. The Opposition stated that 50 Taliban, including a commander, were killed in the fighting; while during house to house search's conducted by the Taliban in Samangan 28 Taliban fighters were killed in an Opposition ambush.

5 September

According to Pakistan-based private news agency, the Opposition launched an attack against the Taliban in the northern province of Kapisa killing 15 and capturing another 16 Taliban soldiers.

7 September

Fighting along the Old Road north of Kabul and at Nejrab north east of Kabul continued amid claims by the Opposition that it has inflicted heavy casualties on the Taliban. An Opposition spokesman said 40 Taliban soldiers and Commander Mulla Khan Shuhke were killed in the fighting.

7 September

The Opposition claimed it shot down a Taliban helicopter in Najrab district of Kapisa Province killing all six on board.

8 September

At least 12 people were killed and 50 injured in a Taliban bombing raid on a busy bazaar in the northern city of Taloqan.

According to the report the Taliban have subjected Taloqan to heavy aerial bombing during the last four days in retaliation for their defeat in Kunduz Province. The Opposition General, Sayed Anwari, stated that the "Taliban's indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas continued to contravene basic human rights conventions and as such we once again call on the international community to condemn these barbaric acts of violence".

13 September

The Taliban army launched a powerful offensive against Opposition soldiers clinging to a strategic cross road in northern Samangan Province, pounding the Dare-Suf area with jet fighters and helicopter gun ships. No casualty figures were available.

13 September

The Taliban bombings at Taloqan airport left two American journalists wounded in Takhar Province. Based on the information available the two American journalists, whose names and other particulars could not be ascertained, received serious injuries and were taken to Tajikistan for medical treatment.

19 September

Taliban jets bombed northern Takhar Province, killing 45 people and wounding 100 others. The Taliban have intensified air raids on villages and remote areas in northern Afghanistan.

21 September

At least 18 missiles fired by the Taliban fighters landed in Pakistan territory, in lower Dir district, as the Taliban tried to hit the home of their rival commander Malik Zarin.

23 September

According to Dr. Abdullh, Opposition Deputy Foreign Minister, 200 villages in Ghor and Farah Provinces, which surround the strategically important Province of Herat, were now under the control of the Opposition after heavy fighting in both provinces. Forces loyal to the Opposition Commander, Ahmad Shah Masood, also advanced to within 15 kilometres of Shindand airport.

26 September

It was reported that during the past two weeks Taliban jets had bombed Taloqan, killing hundreds of civilians. The report confirmed that people are living in underground bunkers, while many others have fled the area for neighbouring Badakhshan Province as it is rumoured that the Taliban fighters are burning houses and killing local people.

27 September

The Opposition claimed that the prominent Taliban Commander Siddique and 15 others were killed in Goldara north of Kabul, while 70 Pakistani and Arabs were captured in Imam Sahib, Kunduz. The POWs have been transferred to Takhar, the report added.

OCTOBER**1 October**

Heavy fighting erupted across Afghanistan's northern front lines as the Opposition conceded the Taliban had made further advances, causing the death of 17 people and the injury of another 25. The Opposition spokesman, Mohammad Habel, further added, their forces had shot down a Russian-made SU-22 fighter during the aerial bombardments over Taloqan, provincial capital of Takhar.

4 October

The Taliban forces captured Khawaja Ghar town and its airport in Kunduz Province, the BBC reported.

5 October

According to the Opposition commander, General Fahim, heavy casualties were inflicted on Taliban when the Opposition launched an ambush on them in Hazar Bagh district of Takhar Province.

8 October

Fighting continued between the Taliban and Opposition in Takhar and Kunduz provinces. The Opposition claimed to have captured the high grounds of Khawaja Ghar, including the airport in Kunduz Province.

9 October

Ahmad Shah Masood has offered to free certain Pakistani Taliban against the release of some of his men held by the Taliban. It was learnt that about 122 Pakistani Taliban were being held by Masood in the Panjsher valley and Takhar Province. The Taliban have yet to respond to Masood's offer.

15 October

The Opposition repulsed a major offensive against their northern stronghold in Takhar Province, killing several Taliban soldiers, an Opposition spokesman said.

18 October

The Opposition forces recaptured Khawaja Ghar and Hazar Bagh districts in north-eastern Takhar Province and seized a vital supply route on the Tajikistan border.

27 October

Opposition forces captured several towns after a heavy overnight assault on the Taliban in the northern Province of Samangan. The report stated that the Opposition Alliance captured Safed Kotal, Chabchal, Dehi-Maqsood and Keshنده in the key provincial valley of Dare-Suf.

NOVEMBER**1 November**

At least three people were killed and seven injured as Taliban jets bombed Taloqan, capital of the north-eastern Afghan province of Takhar, Opposition sources said.

1 November

The Opposition has advanced towards the strategic city of Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan after blocking the Bamyan - Mazar-i-Sharif road, reported radio Tehran.

2 November

The Opposition has claimed to have killed the governor of Sare-Pul Province, Mawlawi Aminullah Amin. The Opposition launched an offensive against the Taliban in Jauzjan Province and took control of Sangcharak, Gusfandi and Tutyar areas.

3 November

Twenty one fighters, including a commander of Professor Rabbani's Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan, were killed during fighting with troops loyal to Commander Abdul Chakir Arab from Gen. Dostum's Junbash-e-Milli. Sahaar News Agency reported that the clash between the two sides took place in Belcharagh in Sare-Pul Province in northern Afghanistan.

3 November

Opposition forces repulsed a counter attack by the Taliban to recapture lost territory in northern Afghanistan. According to the Opposition, the Taliban launched a heavy attack to recapture Topzal and Gosfandi districts in Sare-Pul Province, which was unsuccessfully.

4 November

Prominent commander, Badahar Maddafa of Hizb-i-Islami, was killed in Takhar Province in Northern Afghanistan. The situation in Takhar, under the control of Ahmad Shah Masood, was tense with forces loyal to Hizb-i-Islami and Jamiat-i-Islami poised against each other, the report said.

15 November

Opposition forces claimed to have killed 40 Taliban soldiers and captured Aibak, the provincial centre of Samangan Province.

18 November

Eight civilians were killed and 30 others wounded when Taliban jets carried out several bombing raids over the Opposition Panjsher valley. The bombs hit tent camps set up by civilians who had taken shelter in the valley since the fighting this summer.

22 November

Twenty soldiers of Commander Ahmad Shah Masood's Shoor-e-Nazar are reported to have been killed in combat with soldiers loyal to Prof. Abdur Rab Rasool Sayyaf in northern Badakhshan Province. The report said clashes are taking place in Zarde village of Barak district south of the provincial capital Faizabad.

DECEMBER**2 December**

Seven persons were killed and eighteen other injured in Ishakmish in northern Afghanistan between supporters of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. Meanwhile Taliban warplanes bombed Panjsher valley and Jabalus-Siraj, killing four persons and destroying several posts.

11 December

Despite pledges to honour a Ramazan ceasefire the Taliban have continued to launch a number of offensives in Balkh and Sare -Pul Provinces in an attempt to remove the Opposition.

24 December

Taliban attacked Sholgara in the northern province of Balkh, killing six civilians and wounding eight others.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

JANUARY

2 January

Taliban Higher Education Minister Mawlvi Hamadullah Naumani requested the Pakistan Government to allow genuine Afghan universities to reopen their campuses as the future of about 6,000 students are at stake with the closure of all Afghan universities by the Pakistan Government.

3 January

Taliban have accused Opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood of establishing secret contacts with US officials either to kill or expel Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. Taliban warned the Opposition to desist from hatching conspiracy against Bin Laden, who is guest of the Afghan Nation.

6 January

Ahmad Shah Masood welcomed the peace initiative started by two leaders Sibghatullah Mujaddedi and Pir Syed Ahmad Gillani and the formation of a new party under the name of Peace and National Unity Foundation.

6 January

Iran started expelling Afghan refugees during the holy month of Ramazan contrary to the basic tenets of Islam, said Taliban in-charge of Nimroz Province. A group of three thousand such refugees arrived in Zaranj city, Nimroz Province, and the process is to continue without any interval. Report also added that eighty percent of these refugees are Hazaras and the remaining twenty percent belonged to different nationalities.

6 January

China complained to Islamabad against guerrilla training of Muslim separatists from the north-western autonomous Xinjiang Province in the Pakistani tribal areas as well as in neighbouring Afghanistan. Taliban who have long been accused of lending their territory to help provide training to Chinese Muslim extremists denied the charges and called it absolutely wrong.

6 January

Taliban Minister for Higher Education, Mawlavi Hamadullah Naumani, said a decision had been taken in principle to open the five Afghan universities in Peshawar but no date had been fixed for opening them. He added that the universities would work under the control of the Afghan government and Taliban authorities would decide whether girls would be allowed to study in the university or not.

6 January

A three member UN delegation arrived in Iran for talks with Iranian officials on matters relating to the plight and future of

the two million Afghan refugees residing in Iran. Erick de Mul, the new UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan was leading

the team. According to the report, in November and December 1998 some 12,000 Afghan refugees in Iran returned to Afghanistan with the help of UN.

7 January

Taliban Opposition offered an immediate ceasefire in Afghanistan to avoid further blood shed. The offer was made by Dr. Abdullah, spokesman of Burhanuddin Rabbani.

8 January

Taliban rejected the Opposition offer for a ceasefire and an interim government to end the Afghan civil war saying the Opposition cannot be trusted and neither a ceasefire nor talks with them were possible.

9 January

The UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, Erick De Mul, arrived in Islamabad from a visit to Iran. De Mul who led a three member delegation to Iran said that the Iranian officials have agreed in principle that the return of Afghan refugees to their country should be voluntary. De Mul added Iran wanted repatriation of the refugees because the country was suffering from reduction of oil prices. Unemployment is on the rise and the ministry dealing with Afghan refugees was under tremendous pressure to solve the problem.

10 January

Taliban rejected the recent creation of a mediator party made by two moderate Afghan leaders Sibghatullah Mujaddedi and Pir Syed Ahmad Gillani.

14 January

Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, the Taliban official met with Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahayan, in UAE and stated that the Taliban wanted to boost ties with the UAE, Gulf states, and Arab countries in general.

15 January

As a goodwill gesture, the Taliban government returned 21 Iranian trucks that were seized by the Taliban forces in northern Afghanistan.

17 January

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammed Omar urged the alliance battling the Taliban to end their confrontation and join his government. In a message on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr Omar promised "safety and security" of life and property for all opponents who join the Taliban government.

21 January

The UN Security Council called on Taliban and Opposition forces to end fighting in Afghanistan without delay. The warring parties should conclude a ceasefire and resume negotiations with the aim of creating a "broad based and fully representative government", said Brazilian Ambassador Celso Amorim, this month Council President.

22 January

Japan is concerned about the situation in Afghanistan and urged the Taliban to ensure the security of the Afghan people and humanitarian relief worker in the country, said Japanese Foreign Minister in a meeting with Taliban officials in Tokyo.

22 January

Osama bin Laden made a rare public appearance this week, joining mass prayers of Eid-ul-Fitr with the head of Taliban in Kandahar Province.

23 January

Russia called for an immediate end to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the establishment of a broad-based government with participation of all Afghan groups in the country.

24 January

Taliban Opposition launched a unified military council to wage full scale war against the Taliban in the coming spring season. The new council will be called the Supreme Military Council or Shura-i-aali Nizami (Council for Settlement of Military Affairs) which includes factions of Hezb-i-Wahdat, Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Ittehad-i-Islami of Prof. Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf.

24 January

Turkmenistan Foreign Minister, Boris Shikhrumadov, arrived in Islamabad on a two-day official visit for talks with Pakistani officials on bilateral and regional issues particularly Afghanistan. Both countries called for restoration of durable peace and stability in Afghanistan and reiterated their support for the UN and OIC efforts to bring normalcy to Afghanistan. Reports added the Foreign Minister also held talks with the Taliban delegation led by Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil in Islamabad on the Afghan situation.

27 January

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has been invited by the Sudanese and Iraqi authorities to visit their countries.

27 January

Iran planned to reactivate its diplomatic missions in some cities of Afghanistan, said an Iranian official.

30 January

In response to the recent UN Security Council resolution on Afghanistan, the Taliban Foreign Minister said that terrorism

and narcotics issues could be resolved through talks only. The international community should pursue the path of co-operation and understanding if it intends to resolve the problems such as terrorism, human rights and drug trafficking.

FEBRUARY**1 February**

Pakistan declined to accept Mawlawi Shahuddin Dilawar, the former Afghan Charge d'Affairs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia as Consul General in the Afghan Consulate in Karachi.

1 February

Iran welcomed the Taliban offer for an improvement of relations between the two countries.

1 February

US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, arrived in Islamabad for talks with the Pakistan Prime Minister on co-ordinating efforts for combating terrorism. In this regard an established military court throughout Pakistan will be made for a full fledged war on terrorists, said a Pakistani diplomat.

1 February

A high level Chinese delegation arrived in Kabul for talks with Taliban officials. The visit of the Chinese delegation aimed at evolving consensus and understanding between the two countries. China is keen to promote friendly relations with Afghanistan and has no problem with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, said a Chinese official.

2 February

Ariana Afghan Airlines President, Hafez Younis, said the Afghan carrier was gearing up for its first direct flights to China and was seeking to bolster its fleet through talks with US and French aviation companies. According to him, flights to China's far western provinces would begin in six weeks and concentrate on cargo, with imports of Chinese electrical goods to be exchanged for exports of Afghan fruits and carpets.

3 February

The US Assistant Secretary of State, Karl Inderfurth, met with the Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Jalil Akhund and demanded the expulsion of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. Karl Inderfurth held extensive meetings in Peshawar with Afghan Mujahideen leaders, including former President, Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddidi, NIFA Leader Gillani and Mangal Saeed, an erstwhile ally of Hekmatyar on the current situation in Afghanistan.

4 February

A four-member UN delegation including UN special investigator Michael Hall arrived in Kabul for talks with the Taliban authorities on the security situation for UN staff. Report said talks had been constructive and could lead to a return of the UN, perhaps by next month.

7 February

US and UK warned against more attacks by Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden. According to CIA and MI5 bin Laden was still in contact with world-wide concerned quarters and soon would launch an attack against US and UK interests.

8 February

British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Mullah Abdul Jalil and demanded that Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden be taken into custody. It was the first ministerial-level contact between the Taliban administration and the British Government. According to another report Taliban suggested opening of an office in London but Britain turned down the Taliban request to open a liaison office in London, if not an embassy.

8 February

The Taliban offered its condolences over the death of Jordanian King Hussein, praising his support for Afghans during the 1979-89 military occupation in Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union.

9 February

Taliban stated that Osama bin Laden was free to leave Afghanistan but he would not be forced out, the decision was taken by the Taliban leadership after considering the latest US request for Osama to be expelled from Afghanistan, said Taliban spokesman Abdul Mutmaen.

10 February

Taliban are strictly in control of Osama bin Laden. According to a report, a special team had been set up to keep watch on bin Laden, banning him from accepting visitors or having outside contact.

12 February

Taliban claimed that Israel had established contacts with the Northern Alliance and was supporting them in their attempts to topple the Taliban government in Kabul. In this regard, the Israeli ambassador to Germany, Avi Primor, recently met former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and discussed matters related to Afghanistan situation.

13 February

Three Pakistani Islamic parties condemned US pressure on Afghanistan's Taliban regime to expel Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, vowing that forces loyal to Islam in the region would protect him.

14 February

Iranian officials met Ahmad Shah Masood and discussed "current developments" in Afghanistan and "new strategies to ensure peace and security" in the country.

14 February

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in a statement said that Osama bin Laden went missing since a few days and it was unclear whether he had left or was still in Afghanistan.

15 February

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in a press conference in Kandahar quoted that with the help of God his religious army would defeat the forces of Ahmad Shah Masood, the last obstacle to total Taliban control of the country.

22 February

Taliban Opposition leaders met in Jabul Seraj in northern Afghanistan to review their plans for the future. Burhanuddin Rabbani, commander Ahmad Shah Masood, chief of Ittehad-i-Islami, Professor Abdul Rab Rasool Sayyaf and other Opposition leaders attended the meeting. The meeting was said to have decided to improve ties with neighbouring Pakistan by brushing aside all previous bitterness and tension.

23 February

UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi held substantive and intensive talks with ambassadors of 6+2 Group as well as European Union members European Commission and Japan, based in Islamabad on ways and means to push forward the peace process in Afghanistan and pave the way for a negotiated settlement of the problem.

26 February

Taliban restricted the entry of Pakistani and other foreign journalists into Afghanistan. The Taliban leadership in Kandahar ordered not to grant visas to any Pakistani and journalists from other countries.

28 February

The Taliban Opposition announced the creation of a leadership council to pave the way for a bases parliament with representation of all groups and a broad front against Taliban. According to the report a forty-member leadership council comprising senior ranking leaders was formed to pave the way for the formation of a 150 member parliament.

MARCH**1 March**

Taliban and Opposition forces accepted a UN proposal to hold talks with each other.

1 March

The US administration decertified Afghanistan for its non-cooperation with the US in dealing with the drug problem, virtually accusing Taliban groups of conniving with drug traffickers. Afghanistan and Burma are the only two countries, whom the US denied certification this year. Afghanistan and

Burma supply over 90 per cent of the world's supply of opium poppy.

1 March

The UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, met former Afghan Mujahiddin in Peshawar including Prof. Sibghatullah Mujaddedi, Pir Syed Ahmad Gillani, Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammady and a large number of other Afghan intellectuals in connection with his assignment to seek a permanent solution to the conflict through political ways. Brahimi said that only the Afghans themselves could help restore peace in their country through negotiated solution of all the problems.

3 March

NWFP Government is contemplating to restrict movement of Afghan nationals living within the civilian populations in NWFP and confine them to the refugee camps. According to the NWFP Chief minister the execution of a plan of action to confine Afghan refugees to the camps is to begin from March 15.

4 March

US warned that it might take further military action in Afghanistan to punish Osama bin Laden. This is partly responsible for holding up the return of UN staff to the country. Washington has told UN that it may not be able to warn the world body before hand if it launched another air campaign on Laden's encampment in Afghanistan.

5 March

UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, met Benazir Bhutto and exchanged views on the situation in Afghanistan.

7 March

Russia welcomed forthcoming talks between Taliban and Opposition in Ashgabat.

8 March

Speaking at an International Women's Day meeting, Saima Karimi, an activist of the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan, accused the Pakistan Government for what is happening to women in Afghanistan, claiming that the Taliban are the product of religious schools patronised by Pakistan.

9 March

The Secretary General of the OIC met UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, in Teheran and discussed the latest developments in Afghanistan.

11 March

UNHCR expressed concern over plans by the NWFP Government to restrict Afghan refugees to camps, saying the

move would cause uncertainty among refugees and reflect negatively on Pakistan in the community of nations.

13 March

Taliban welcomed the UN decision to return its international staff to Afghanistan after a six-month absence. It was a good move and a political success for the Taliban, said a senior Taliban official.

14 March

Pakistan and Iran welcomed the landmark agreement between the Taliban and Opposition.

14 March

The Jamaat-i-Islami, NWFP, opposed Sardar Mahtab's government's decision to restrict movement of Afghan refugees to the camps and termed the decision unwise and unjustified. Siraj-ul-Haq, the acting head of Jamaat-i-Islami, NWFP, in a meeting said that any use of force against the refugees could spark dangers and would create a law and order situation. He called upon the Pakistan Government to start joint efforts with Iran to find out peaceful solution of the Afghan problem, which would pave the way for the return of refugees to Afghanistan.

15 March

Taliban claimed that they had only agreed to a two-point peace accord that called for a ceasefire and for talks on a power-sharing formula and had not decided to form a broad-based government, radio Kabul reported.

15 March

An advisor to ex-president Burhanuddin Rabbani said the Ashgabat agreement couldn't solve the Afghan conflict, as it was not participated in by various Jihadi groups. He said Pakistan thought that other jihad groups such as Hezb-i-Wahdat, National Northern Alliance and Hezb-i-Islami no longer existed and only the Ahmad Shah Masood group was left in Afghanistan. He added that such an agreement without safeguarding and protecting the interests and rights of other groups cannot be accepted.

15 March

Former Afghan President, Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddedi expressed concern over the NWFP Government's move of restricting Afghan refugees to camps.

16 March

France and Japan welcome recent developments between the Afghan factions in Ashgabat.

16 March

Japanese Foreign Minister, Masahiro Koumura, welcomed Taliban and Opposition agreement to form a coalition government in Afghanistan.

18 March

The US and British Government have refused to allow their citizens who work with the UN to return to Afghanistan, citing security concern.

18 March

The NWFP Government closed down all the clinics and drugstores run by Afghan refugees in Peshawar.

18 March

Afghanistan's human rights record was in a poor state said a UN human rights investigator Kamal Hossain who paid a two-day visit to Kabul. "We have found 'horrendous' evidence of a breakdown in basic living conditions in Kabul," he added.

20 March

Taliban have inducted several Shia representatives "who recently were defeated by the Taliban" in a newly formed commission set up to tackle issues and problems concerning Shia-populated Bamyán province in central Afghanistan.

21 March

Lakhdar Brahimi flew into Kabul for talks with the Taliban leaders on peace process and security for UN staff. The UN envoy met the Taliban interim council leader Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, and discussed a host of issues, focusing the Ashgabat peace talks, and welcomed the agreement between the Taliban and Northern Alliance Opposition, describing it as a landmark achievement towards the goal of durable peace in Afghanistan.

22 March

Turkey welcomed the Ashgabat talks between the representatives of the Northern Alliance and Taliban.

22 March

Lakhdar Brahimi met Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz and discussed with him the latest situation in Afghanistan.

23 March

British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Derek Fatchett, said Britain supported national reconciliation in Afghanistan and encouraged the Taliban to recognise that they needed a broadly based government.

23 March

President of Pakistan Awami Party demanded the Government to grant Pakistani citizenship to all Afghan nationals living in Pakistan.

24 March

Taliban Opposition said they would not agree to participate in any future government led by the Taliban, as "The Afghan nation does not want the Taliban", said Dr. Abdullah, an aide to Ahmad Shah Masood.

25 March

The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported to the full Senate a resolution that criticised the Taliban for its treatment of women and girls. According to US Senators Barbara Boxer and Sam Brownback, the Clinton Administration should use all appropriate means to prevent the Taliban from obtaining the seat in the UN General Assembly reserved for Afghanistan, so long as the human rights violations against women and girls in Afghanistan continue.

25 March

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar rejected the idea of a coalition government with the Opposition Commander Ahmad Shah Masood saying other factions would also demand a share in power if one group was given representation.

26 March

Japan and the Taliban held high level talks in Kabul on ways and means to enhance contacts between the two countries. The Japanese envoy met Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Rahman Zahid and other top level Taliban officials aimed at creating better understanding.

26 March

Lakhdar Brahimi voiced alarm that the Taliban and Opposition were getting ready for war as winter is finishing and urged them to agree quickly on a date and venue for a next round of peace talks.

APRIL**1 April**

Taliban have made it clear that the status of their leader Mulla Mohammad Omar in any Afghan government set-up was non-acceptable and he would have to be accepted as Afghanistan's Supreme Leader in any peace settlement. According to the Taliban spokesman, Opposition should know that Omar was their Amirul Momineen and would remain so in any government set-up in Afghanistan.

1 April

Taliban administrator Mawlawi Ahmad Jan, held a meeting with a four-member Chinese delegation in Islamabad and discussed matters of mutual interest. Taliban have asked the Chinese government for help in the reconstruction of cement plants in Kandahar and Herat, southern and south-western Afghanistan. The report added, the Chinese delegation would shortly visit Afghanistan to assess the reconstruction work.

14 April

UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhar Brahimi, has expressed concern over the failure of talks between the Taliban and the Opposition and appealed to the Taliban to resume peace talks.

19 April

Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Dr. Azeddine Laraki has urged the Afghan warring factions to stop fighting and peacefully resolve the crisis in Afghanistan.

24 April

Iran appealed to Taliban to resume peace talks aimed at bringing an end to the Afghan conflict.

24 April

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, Karl Inderfurth, has warned against dire consequences if Taliban do not expel Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. Speaking at a conference on Afghanistan at the Central Asian Institute in Washington, he said "terrorists based in Afghanistan are posing a serious threat to the American people and interests."

28 April

Ahmad Shah Masood has allowed two foreign journalists to visit the Lal - Bag prison in Northern Afghanistan, where 100 Pakistanis are being kept in prison.

MAY**1 May**

In a major move, Afghanistan's King, Zahir Shah, announced that he was launching a peace move by sending a team of his advisers to meet representatives of the Taliban and Opposition Northern Alliance. He added that he was convening a meeting of about 30-35 prominent Afghans to discuss preparation for holding a Loya Jirga (Grand assembly) to find a solution for Afghanistan's conflict.

3 May

Nine leaders of three Shia groups of Afghanistan announced the coalition of the three groups following talks in Iran. The alliance called the Supreme Council of Islamic Coalition of Afghanistan will help the three parties to further consolidate their forces and strongholds.

3 May

Taliban ridiculed former King Zahir Shah's peace proposals and saying that he has lost the confidence of the Afghan people.

7 May

Taliban barred Pakistani journalists from visiting Afghanistan to cover the massive anti-polio vaccination campaign in Afghanistan. The Taliban consulate in Peshawar and embassy in Islamabad denied visas to Pakistani journalists planning to proceed to Jalalabad, Kandahar and Herat to witness the three day immunisation campaign.

9 May

Taliban Opposition agreed, in principle, to a proposed ceasefire, which would allow the UN to undertake a polio vaccination project.

14 May

The US welcomed efforts by former Afghan King Zahir Shah to initiate a peace process for his war ravaged country.

17 May

Taliban accused Iran of shelling western Farah and Herat provinces, while Iran denied reports of military clashes with Afghanistan.

22 May

Taliban urged Iran to stop meddling in Afghan affairs and warned any future plots would be quashed. The warning follows Taliban claims that it had suppressed an Iranian backed rebellion in the south-west Province of Herat.

23 May

US has expressed concern over revengeful operations by the Taliban in central Afghanistan.

JUNE**1 June**

Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Kamilov, on a brief visit to Kandahar, had a meeting with the Taliban Supreme Leader Mohammad Omar and exchanged views on mutual interests. The Taliban Leader stated that they would attend the forthcoming Six Plus two meeting on the Afghan problem in Tashkent if they were invited as Afghanistan's sole legal authority.

1 June

Thousands of Taliban officials have gathered in their main stronghold in the southern city of Kandahar, summoned by reclusive leader Mullah Mohammad Omar to discuss government policies. Amir Khan Muttaqi, Taliban Information and Culture Minister, told Reuters that some 10,000 officials were attending the meeting to discuss the country's administrative, political, military, education and economic issues.

5 June

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan reported improvement in the contacts between the Taliban in Afghanistan and several foreign countries especially the Central Asian Republics, but expressed his concern over "the significant re-supply of war material" to both the warring factions there during recent months.

7 June

Taliban rejected the Cyprus moot on Afghanistan and termed it a waste of time. Taliban Information and Culture Minister, Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi, said that the meeting was a serious foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

10 June

Opposition forces said that they had accepted a UN appeal to observe a ceasefire for the second round of a polio immunisation campaign.

AID AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

JANUARY

6 January

The World Food Programme re-opened its subsidised bread programme in the eastern Jalalabad city of Afghanistan to meet the needs of the city's increasingly vulnerable population of more than one-half million residents. The bakeries were closed down more than four months back when a mob attacked the WFP office in Jalalabad, in a reaction to the US cruise missile attacks on terrorist training camps in Khost.

6 January

The United Nations Children Fund UNICEF released statistics which indicated that the proportion of school going children in Afghanistan is decreasing and the situation of girls education is very serious as the Taliban have violated the agreement to end discrimination against women and safeguard girls rights.

6 January

20 Afghan refugee women were given physiotherapy training at the office of Guardians an Afghan NGOs in Peshawar.

6 January

A large number of Hazara refugees arrived from northern Afghanistan in Pakistan border; areas, e.g. Peshawar and Quetta. The Quetta-based UNHCR office provided a limited one-time assistance programme for the most vulnerable groups of fresh arrivals and over 150 families have so far been assisted through local NGOs.

7 January

WFP completed its three-week-long delivery of emergency winter food aid to more than 120,000 people of the Hazarajat region in Central Afghanistan who are facing a winter of extreme hunger and poverty.

12 January

Chairman Customs Standing Committee All Pakistani Commercial Exporters Association, Ziaulhaq Sarhadi, demanded the Government permit exports to Afghanistan in Pakistani currency and SAFRON permits be limited to NGOs providing aid to Afghanistan. As there is no active banking system in Afghanistan, therefore, it is impossible for the Pakistani exporters to sell exports in foreign currency, he added.

14 January

A budget of Rs. 50 million has been allocated by the Taliban government for the reconstruction of roads in eastern Nangarhar Province of Afghanistan. The reconstruction of the Jalalabad - Darunta Road and the Jalalabad - Kabul would start soon, said a Taliban official.

23 January

The United Nations has set up a Gender Co-ordination Unit for Afghanistan, indicating that it is ready to confront the Taliban government that opposes all outside support for Afghan women. The unit will work under the UN Co-ordinator's Office for Afghanistan "to formulate gender policy jointly with other agencies", said UN officials. He also added that the policy will be implemented together with the recommendations of the 1997 inter-agency gender mission which submitted a number of proposals for improving the status of women in Afghanistan.

23 January

The Taliban Minister for Water and Power, Mullah Mohammad Essa, contacted the Uzbekistan authorities asking for an increase in the electricity flow to certain areas in northern Afghanistan. Uzbekistan had been providing 32 mw of electricity to several parts of Balkh and Jawzjan Provinces. It was further learnt that the Taliban also contacted Turkmen and Iranian authorities for the resumption of electricity supply to several areas in Nimroz and the Torghundi area in Herat Province.

25 January

UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, Erick de Mul, paid a one day visit to Kandahar and held talks with Taliban senior officials, Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil and Governor of Kandahar, Mullah Hassan. This visit aimed at starting the conditions for the return of the UN international staff to Afghanistan. The Taliban urged the UN to send back their international staff to Afghanistan, assuring that the Islamic militia would provide protection to UN staff members.

FEBRUARY

11 February

100 persons died and 210 were injured after a heavy earthquake struck Eastern Afghanistan, Maydan Shah, Wardak and surrounding villages of Ander, Chak and hamlets in Logar Province. The earthquake which measured 5.5 on the Richter scale destroyed 2,300 houses and left thousands of people to endure the bitter cold outside. According to another report Sheikh Abad south west of Kabul, was also hit by the quake.

14 February

Governor of Wardak Province Mawlavi Shamsuddin, called for urgent international assistance for the earthquake victims, fearing more casualties from exposure and lack of shelter.

15 February

ICRC completed relief operation in the quake-hit areas of Maydan-Wardak and Logar Provinces by assisting 40,000 people. According to the report, ICRC have finished the

13 June

Former Afghan President and chief of Afghan National Liberation Front Prof. Sibghatullah Mujaddadi, after a month long stay in Denmark, arrived back in Peshawar where he and his supporters plan to resume an active part in Afghan politics.

17 June

The UNDP has launched a series of meetings in Scandinavian countries aimed at discussing ways and means for reaching understanding and reconciliation with Taliban. According to the BBC, the members and representatives of nearly 40 donor countries and NGOs and a Taliban official, Mohd Javed Waziri, are taking part in the meetings being held in Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

18 June

Japan will despatch a specialist in South Asian affairs to Pakistan to serve at a special UN Mission mediating between the warring factions in Afghanistan. Based on a report, Koichiro Tanaka, a researcher on South Asia and the Gulf regions at the Middle East Affairs, will be sent to Islamabad where he will start his mission.

22 June

Taliban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar issued a decree laying down a punishment of five years in jail for anybody committing a hostile act against international aid workers.

25 June

US planned a fresh attack on Osama's hideout. According to the report, the US authorities have finalised the unveiled action and are sending intelligence personnel and special army groups to Islamabad and Peshawar to hold talks with their counterparts and to try to hold negotiations with Osama's close aides before launching the attacks.

JULY**7 July**

Taliban Opposition alleged that Pakistan's secret service was masterminding a "classic game" of military incursions into Afghanistan just as in Kashmir. Report said thousands of mercenaries had been pouring into Afghanistan from Pakistan amid expectations of an imminent offensive by the Taliban.

7 July

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar condemned as unjust and malicious the sanctions imposed by the US against Afghanistan for protecting Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden. The US had taken a vindictive action because of mutual differences and malicious designs against the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Omar added.

15 July

A spokesman of Afghan Commander Ahmad Shah Masood blamed Taliban and "their real supporter Pakistan as the main reason for failure of all peace efforts in Afghanistan".

16 July

Secretary General of UN Kofi Annan expressed deep concern over the assassination of Afghan leader Abdul Ahad Karzai, and appealed to Pakistani authorities to do their utmost to investigate Karzai's death and ensure safety of Afghans residing in Pakistan.

18 July

The Six Plus Two meeting would begin in Tashkent 19 July to discuss ways for peaceful solution to the long standing Afghan imbroglio. Both sides Taliban and Opposition reached no agreement in the two-day peace talks in Tashkent, other than a pledge not to block foreign humanitarian aid from reaching each other's territory.

22 July

UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi arrived in Kabul to further the shaky peace process initiated between the Taliban and Opposition in Uzbekistan. Brahimi, met Taliban leaders including Mullah Mohammad Rabbani and made a last-ditch appeal to Taliban and Opposition not to proceed with a major offensive.

22 July

The US is under no illusion about the degree to which it can see an immediate end to the conflict in Afghanistan. "We have made it clear that we want a ceasefire and certain confidence building measures including the exchange of prisoners", said US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Karl Inderfurth, who represented the US at the Six Plus Two group meeting in Uzbekistan.

24 July

Taliban renewed a call for direct talks with the US to resolve the long simmering deadlock over the dissident Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden.

29 July

Amnesty International warned that thousand of civilians in northern Afghanistan could suffer serious human rights abuses unless the international community took action to protect them in the wake of new fighting. "Once again, civilians are the likely targets of human rights abuses in the context of a conflict they have no active part in", the report added

29 July

A Taliban sponsored demonstration will be held Friday after Juma Prayer at Jalalabad against the renewed US attempts of building pressure on Taliban for the extradition of Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden.

AUGUST**1 August**

Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan announced full support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and appreciated the religious militia protection of Osama bin Laden against American threats.

1 August

Taliban Interior Minister Mullah Hassan Akhund sent a letter to the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, urging him to recognise the legitimate Taliban Government in Kabul. The appeal for recognition follows a statement by the Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan that the UN will not recognise Taliban even if they capture the entire country.

1 August

Two former Presidents, Burhanuddin Rabbani and Sibghatullah Mojaddedi wrote to Pakistan's President Rafique Tarar, asking him to withdraw Pakistani troops from Afghanistan. The statement followed reports that thousands of Pakistani Mujahideen and several hundred Arabs had joined the offensive, lured by Taliban.

1 August

The UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan met Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and raised the issue of thousands of Pakistani militants fighting along side the Taliban. "Nawaz also expressed concern over the situation of a large number of Pakistani nationals in a conflict in a neighbouring country".

2 August

The Taliban asked the Opposition to surrender for the good of the war-wrecked country as the two sides continued to pound each other with heavy artillery fire on several fronts.

2 August

Ameer Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Pakistan (JUL-F) Maulana Fazalur Rehman, warned America not to impose war on Afghanistan by launching any attack. It will be considered war against Muslim Ummah which will wage Jihad against the USA and Americans. No American citizen will be spared, he declared while addressing a large protest rally in Islamabad.

3 August

The US was "deeply distressed" by the current offensive by Taliban saying the fundamentalist Islamic group was "deluded" if it thought it could win the country's civil war. State Department spokesman James Rubin, said the only way for Afghanistan to stabilise was for an all-party all-faction peace deal as reports from Kabul indicated the Taliban offensive against rivals was causing a refugee crisis.

4 August

The President of Tajikistan ordered military reinforcements to his country's border with Afghanistan in response to mounting military and political tensions there.

4 August

A Pakistani leader and former Federal Minister Azam Khan Hoti warned that the fighting between the Taliban and their Opposition could spill over in to NWFP and trigger clashes in

Pakistan between religious fanatics and nationalists. Speaking at a meeting he said the Pakistan Government policies in both Kashmir and Afghanistan had proved a failure and it would have a spill over effect in Pakistan, especially in the Frontier.

5 August

The former Afghan King, Zahir Shah, expressed deep concern over the ongoing war in Afghanistan and denounced "foreign interference" in the ongoing escalation.

5 August

UN Security Council condemned Taliban's latest offensive against the Opposition in the north of the country.

5 August

Dr. Abdullah, Foreign minister in the deposed Afghan Government, asked the UN to take stronger measures to stop Pakistan's acts of aggression. Pakistan is trying to find a military solution through the Taliban and it is time to put real pressure on Pakistan, he added.

6 August

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan appealed to the six countries bordering Afghanistan to honour a pledge to keep out of the civil war, lest it become a transnational conflict. Even as a purely internal conflict, the Afghan crisis is a clear menace to regional peace and stability, Annan said in a statement.

7 August

Secretary General Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami, Pakistan Maulana Fazlur Rahman called upon the people to kill all Americans present in the country if Pakistani soil was used for an attack on Osama bin Laden or any American spy entered the tribal areas in this regard.

7 August

China regretted the escalation of fighting, calling on both sides to end the renewed conflict as soon as possible.

8 August

A US Congressman, Dana Rorabaker, condemned Taliban for initiating the latest round of fighting against the Opposition. He deplored that the Taliban were receiving military assistance from Pakistan and other countries and were killing their own people.

8 August

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) called on the warring parties in Afghanistan to stop fighting and return to the negotiating table under the auspices of the UN.

8 August

The Taliban approached Deeni Madarass (religious institutions) in NWFP for reinforcements to fight a resurrected

Opposition Northern Alliance. A two-member delegation, sent by Taliban's Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, held meetings with heads of different seminaries to seek early release of Taliban to join fellow fighters in defending Kabul against a possible onslaught from Ahmad Shah Masood's forces.

10 August

The UN urged Taliban and their foes to allow thousands displaced by fresh fighting to return home and rebuked warring factions for inflicting fresh suffering on ordinary people. Parties responsible for such disasters can not cynically commit such criminal acts and then turn to the UN and the international community as a whole to help save their own people from disasters provoked by those who claim to be their country's leaders, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said.

10 August

EU expressed dismay at the violence in Afghanistan and that the Taliban had ignored the call for peaceful political negotiation. The EU appealed to the warring parties to immediately cease fighting and to return to the negotiating table, said a communiqué from EU Presidency.

17 August

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan strongly condemned the Taliban for forcibly relocating thousands of civilians and demanded that the Taliban observe international humanitarian law. In a statement he urged the parties to immediately end the conflict and take measures to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

18 August

Pakistan sent a four member delegation to Dushanbe for negotiations with the United Front of Afghanistan (UFA). The Delegation held talks with the Masood's close aid Younas Qanooni, in Dushanbe. Report said the Opposition seems to have given no importance to Islamabad's bid to restore contacts between the two sides because Rabbani and Masood openly blamed Pakistan for involving its armed forces to help Taliban.

20 August

The Opposition have rejected Pakistan's offer to mediate in peace talks with the Taliban. "We explained to the Pakistani representative that they cannot act as mediators because a mediator is a neutral and impartial person and they are at war against us", said Younas Qanooni an Opposition Leader.

21 August

Taliban Information Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said on the first anniversary of the cruise missile attack that the difference between Taliban and the US should be resolved through talks and problems could not be solved through the use of force. He also added that Taliban are ready to settle issues with Washington through talks.

22 August

The Opposition asked Pakistan to bring a shift in its policy towards Afghanistan by withdrawing armed forces from Afghanistan and abandoning support to the Taliban. In an interview Masood's top aide, Younus Qanuni, said "Instead of sending army to Afghanistan and fighting against the Afghan nation, Islamabad should evolve a new strategy keeping in view the interest of the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan".

SEPTEMBER

1 September

Ahmad Shah Masood accused Pakistan and the US firm UNOCAL of backing the Taliban. UNOCAL has oil and gas interests with Pakistan and wants to see the creation of a pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan across Afghanistan, according to Masood.

1 September

Indian Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh, said that "developments in Afghanistan directly affect India because the fighting there helps spread the trade in narcotics and weapons. The fighting and instability in Afghanistan has led to the proliferation of small arms across the continent, the spread of the narcotics trade, and these activities are encouraged by Pakistan".

2 September

The Taliban asked Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to release Afghan prisoners. According to the report 3,000 Afghans accused of committing major crimes are behind bars in Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif issued a directive for immediate steps to be taken for the release of those accused of committing minor crimes and the arrangement of lawyers for them.

2 September

The Opposition formally rejected Pakistan's Peace efforts and announced plans for a cabinet reshuffle in its ousted government. The decision followed a meeting of the front members in the Panjsher valley.

6 September

The Taliban accused France of militarily supporting the Opposition after a French delegation from Paris visited Opposition leaders in the Panjsher valley. Radio Shariat announced that "the trip by the French delegation to the Panjsher and talks between French political and military experts proves once again that the Opposition have yielded to slavery."

8 September

The US said that it has started negotiation with Russia and other members of the Security Council to review the imposition of economic sanctions against the Taliban. A US State Department official said that Taliban are not changing their policy on Osama bin Laden and therefore the imposition

of sanctions is a reasonable way to mount pressure on the Taliban, reported the BBC.

9 September

UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Afghanistan, Kamal Hussein, arrived in Kabul to discuss the flight of tens of thousands of people from the Shamali region north of Kabul.

10 September

The Chief of the Pakistan Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI), Maulana Fazlur Rahman, warned the US that the Ummah would boycott American products if it tried to impose economic sanctions on Afghanistan. Maulana Fazlur Rahman set a two-day deadline for American Commandos to leave Pakistan or else the JUI workers and tribal people would resort to force.

11 September

Kuwait has imposed a ban on Afghan passengers holding passports issued by the Taliban regime in Kabul flying into the Middle East. The director general of immigration, ministry of interior of Kuwait, informed all international airlines not to accept any passenger holding the newly issued Afghan passports because it is not recognised by the state of Kuwait.

12 September

At the end of a two-week investigation in the Taliban and Opposition-controlled areas of Afghanistan the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Comaraswamy, slammed the Taliban religious army for its widespread, systematic, and officially sanctioned discrimination against women. Comaraswamy stated that the Taliban Ministry of Vice and Virtue was hateful toward Women and called for international pressures to force the Taliban to dismantle it.

12 September

The Taliban denied a US report that accuses them of persecuting minority Shias in Afghanistan. The Taliban Foreign Ministry accused the US of fanning differences between Shias and Sunnis by such baseless declarations.

15 September

A senior Pakistan delegation is set to leave for Kandahar to discuss a fresh power sharing formula with Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammed Omar amid renewed hopes of a peace deal among the Afghan factions.

14 September

The Taliban sent a letter to the UN Secretary General to complain that the global body wrongly portrays the Taliban as an occupation force in Afghanistan. In a letter to Kofi Annan, the Taliban said the UN unfortunately has the wrong understanding of the situation in Afghanistan and judges the Taliban on evidence supplied by its opponents like Iran, Russia and India.

17 September

The UN said that the Taliban were eliminating the livelihood of thousands of people in Afghanistan. Stephanie Bunker, UN spokesperson, said that the Taliban was following a "scorched earth policy" against the people living in areas controlled by the Opposition. Bunker put the number of IDPs at 85,000 in the Panjsher valley and around 55,000 in Kabul. The UN has also registered IDPs in the northern provinces of Kunduz, Takhar and Baghlan.

18 September

ICRC stated that envoys from the Taliban and Opposition reached an agreement to send representatives into the others territory to visit prisoners.

20 September

One of the central leaders of the Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan (HIA), Waheed Ullah Sabaoon, who joined the ranks of the anti-Taliban northern alliance in violation of party discipline a few months back, formally parted ways with the Hizb-i-Islami.

23 September

Senior officials of the six countries bordering Afghanistan called on the parties to the civil war to conclude a ceasefire and resume political dialogue. The six plus two group, which includes Russian and the US, also expressed deep concern at the increased cultivation, production, and trafficking of narcotics in and from Afghanistan.

23 September

The Taliban suspected Opposition involvement in the rocket attacks on Pakistani territory, because they wanted to create a misunderstanding between Taliban and Pakistan, stated the Taliban Charge'd Affairs, Maulavi Saeed-ur-Rahman Haqqani.

26 September

An Afghan peace conference opened in the German city of Hamburg to discuss ways for the peaceful settlement and resolution of the Afghan problem.

27 September

India and Iran have agreed to exchange experts on Afghanistan to discuss how to contain the spillover effects of the conflict in Afghanistan.

OCTOBER

3 October

The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, has said that to end foreign interference in Afghanistan requires a joint strategy for resolving the Afghanistan conflict, but regretted that the six plus two group has not been able to adopt a common strategy. He also said, that foreign forces were fanning the flames of war in Afghanistan not only by sending arms into Afghanistan but a large number of foreigners were also taking part in the war and are involved in planning military strategies. He

recalled the Taliban human rights violations in the Shamali plains and asked all sides to honour the Convention of Child Rights.

3 October

The Taliban have said that if the US and other members of the Security Council impose more sanctions on Afghanistan, it would further complicate the problem instead of resolving it. "Such activities by the US would only be in the interests of Iran and Russian, which want permanent instability in Afghanistan while the US can get nothing out of it" said the Taliban envoy in New York, Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Mujahid, in an interview with the BBC.

4 October

Islamabad has expressed strong concern to Afghanistan's ruling Taliban about the involvement of Pakistani youth trained in Afghan camps in sectarian violence in Pakistan. The Pakistan government has told Kabul that several of the most wanted Pakistani sectarian terrorists are believed to be living in camps inside Afghanistan. It has demanded they be handed over to Pakistan.

5 October

The Opposition has urged the UN to impose sanctions on the Taliban and Pakistan, saying the step would pave the way for a solution to the crisis in Afghanistan. Dr. Abdullah, former Deputy Foreign Minister of the Opposition made the demand to the UN General Assembly.

5 October

The Taliban in Afghanistan have given a categorical assurance to Pakistan that all the training camps for terrorists will be closed down within 10 days and around 150 Pakistani youth involved in such activities will be handed over to Islamabad. A Pakistani official stated that this assurance was given by Taliban leader Mulla Omar to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's special emissary who visited Kandahar.

6 October

Addressing the 50th session of the UN Committee for Refugees in Geneva, Iran has urged the International Community to pressure the Taliban into ending the war and violation of human rights in Afghanistan.

6 October

American scholar Barnett Rubin, Director of the Centre for Preventive Action, Peace and Conflict Studies Council on Foreign Relations, New York, delivered a lecture at a seminar on "Regional aspects of the Afghan conflict" in the department of International Relations of Peshawar University. He said the divide between Pakistan and Iran over the Afghan issue is the main hurdle in finding a regional solution for the conflict. He also added that in the absence of global implications of the Afghan imbroglio, a regional approach was the most appropriate way to solve the conflict.

7 October

Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, NWFP, has condemned the Punjab Chief Minister, Shahbaz Sharif, for blaming the Taliban administration for the recent wave of terrorism in Pakistan and termed it part of a Western conspiracy against the Muslim government of Afghanistan. The Jamaat-e-Islami accused the Pakistan government of failing to curb terrorism in the country.

9 October

The President of the Pakistan Pakhtunkhwa Qaumi Party, Mohammad Afzal Khan, called for the abolition of the Durand line which divides Afghanistan and Pakistan. "I call upon the government of Pakistan and Afghanistan to declare the Durand Line as null and void and allow free flow of people on both sides" he added.

10 October

The Afghan embassy refused visas to members of a Kyrgyz team, who wanted to visit Kabul for talks with the Taliban about the presence of an Uzbek Islamic group leader in Afghanistan, allegedly involved in the abduction of 4 Japanese geologists in Kyrgyzstan.

10 October

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) lauded Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's statement about terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and urged the government of Pakistan to stop supporting the Taliban.

10 October

The Taliban rejected US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's criticism of women's rights in Afghanistan as slanders. Albright, addressing the California Governor's Conference for women accused the Taliban of treating women as chattel.

11 October

Mufti Mohammad Ismail, in charge of the Defence Affairs of the Taliban, has said that the Taliban did not believe in terrorism and could not be part of any conspiracy against Pakistan or its people as the Taliban consider Pakistan as their second home.

11 October

The Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, stated that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready to engage in talks with everyone on combating terrorism in the world. He also said that the trend "not to distinguish between terrorism and Mujahideen is something distant from justice". The US and other countries should stop maligning Mujahideen as terrorists, he added.

13 October

The UN proposed to freeze the Taliban overseas assets and impose an embargo on Taliban operated flights. A US official, said the resolution was passed in close consultation with Russia and had the support of most members of the council.

14 October

Mullah Mohammad Omar has expressed the desire to establish good ties with the new government in neighbouring Pakistan.

16 October

Commenting on the expected ban on Ariana's flights, the UN Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in Afghanistan, Erick de Mul, told the BBC that the sanctions against flights of the airline abroad would ultimately lead to the termination of the service inside the country and increase the mortality rate among the children in Afghanistan as well. He also said that "not only are the sanctions highly questionable but the political objective behind the decision is highly questionable too".

16 October

The Canadian government said it would press the UN Security Council to go beyond its focus on terrorism in its action against Afghanistan and also address the "appalling" human rights situation. Canada welcome the passage of the resolution threatening sanctions against Afghanistan if the Taliban fail to hand over Osama bin Laden.

16 October

The Taliban representative in New York, Abdul Hakeem Mujahid, has denounced the UN Security Council vote to impose sanctions on Afghanistan over the issue of Osama bin Laden. He said it would add misery to the long suffering people of Afghanistan while undermining efforts to resolve the issue. "We did want to solve the problem through talks and negotiations and it is still our policy" Mujahid said, adding "but putting pressure will have more negative effects than the positive ones, and it will make the problem more complicated than it was before".

18 October

The Hizb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar expressed optimism that Pakistan's military leadership would help put an end to the internecine war in Afghanistan and help facilitate the formation of an elected government in Kabul acceptable to all. He further added that Hizb-i-Islami hoped that the Pakistan military leadership would not support a particular faction or group to prolong the suffering of the Afghan people and would also discourage Pakistan's military groups from taking part in the bloody conflict in Afghanistan.

19 October

The Taliban Supreme Leader, Mulla Mohammad Omar Mujahid, issued a decree from Kandahar which declared

mandatory five years imprisonment terms for those accepting bribe.

20 October

The UN Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, said that he would stand aside from efforts to halt the civil war, but he was ready to resume work if the situation changed. Brahimi told reporters he was "bitterly disappointed" with the warring factions and their foreign backers, especially since an offensive by the Taliban movement in July. He will remain contractually in the UN's service.

20 October

The Taliban have accused France of sending two plane loads of military aid to Opposition leader Ahmad Shah Masood. Two planes had airlifted aid to Kulyab airbase in neighbouring Tajikistan which Masood uses as a supply base. But a spokeswoman for the French foreign ministry in Paris denied the report.

21 October

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) has said that the UN embargo on the Taliban can not resolve the conflict, and the UN needs to take similar decisions against those countries having an influence over affairs in Afghanistan. It believed that such restrictions have no impact on the Taliban because they have already dumped weapons and stressed that if the UN and US are sincere in their efforts for finding out an amicable solution to the conflict.

22 October

The UN Security Council condemned the Taliban for undermining efforts to end the civil war, but decided against explicitly criticising their main supporter, Pakistan. In a statement by its president, Russian Ambassador Sergei Lavrov, the UN Council said the Taliban had a primary responsibility for the continued fighting in Afghanistan.

22 October

Three Shia groups in Afghanistan have written to ousted Afghan President Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani threatening to quit his government if they were not made part of the decision making process. The letter was sent by Shaikh Asef Mohseni's Harket-i-Islami, Karim Khalili's Hezb-i-Wahdat and Ustad Akbari's faction of Hezbi-i-Wahdat.

23 October

The Taliban offered to hold talks with the US to settle their differences over Osama bin Laden. The Taliban Information and Culture Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a statement that for the solution of Osama's case, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is ready for talks with the US. He added that "if the way is paved for a substantial solution to the difficulties

instead of intimidation or pressure by the US, then the Afghan's would warmly welcome it".

23 October

The head of Anti-Terrorism Cell in the US State Department, Michael Shihan, has said that he and another US official were ready to hold talks with Taliban on the issue of Osama bin Laden. He said what the US and UN wanted was for the Taliban to stop harbouring bin Laden and hand him over so that he is tried for the charges against him. Bin Laden would be given the full opportunity for defence in the US and would be treated as innocent until proved guilty.

NOVEMBER

1 November

Osama bin Laden has offered to conditionally leave Afghanistan. In a letter to the Taliban chief Mulla Mohammad Omar, Osama, said he was ready to leave Afghanistan provided the militia "undertook" to help him reach the place of his choice and promised secrecy about his intended destination.

1 November

The Chief Executive of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, ruled out Pakistan involvement in the extradition of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. "This matter concerns the government of Afghanistan and Pakistan has no role in this..." Musharraf added.

1 November

The US reacted to reports that Osama bin Laden had offered to leave Afghanistan by saying he "could run but could not escape prosecution". "Osama can run from Afghanistan but he cannot hide from our determination to seek justice", said State Department spokesman James Rubin.

1 November

In reply to Osama bin Laden's letter offering to leave Afghanistan, the Taliban Information Department head, Mulla Abdul Hye Mutmain, said in Kandahar that Mulla Omar wanted to ascertain whether Osama had taken the decision out of fear of the Taliban's intentions. Omar made it clear that bin Laden should rest assured that the Taliban would not expel him or hand him over to another country. Omar also reminded bin Laden that he had come to Afghanistan on his own and he could now depart on his own.

3 November

Amnesty International urged world leaders to help put an end to human rights abuses in Afghanistan. "All states that have armed, trained and financed warring factions have a special responsibility for ending the human rights catastrophe in the country", the London based human rights group said in a statement. Pakistan, Iran and other countries that are reportedly supporting warring factions, must also use their

influence to ensure that these groups respect human rights, the report added.

6 November

The US has called on the Taliban and all other factions involved in the continuing conflict in Afghanistan to co-operate with the international effort to assist Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Afghanistan who face a serious humanitarian crisis.

9 November

The Leader of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, Pakistan, Maulana Fazlur Lehman, urged the OIC to mediate between the Taliban and the UN to remove a threat of sanctions over Osama bin Laden.

9 November

The Taliban's Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, in a statement appealed to the American people to mount pressure on their government to give up its anti-Afghanistan posture and lift sanctions against the war-battered country.

10 November

Professor, Sibghatullah Mujaddadi, the former Afghan President, in a letter to Chief Executive General Parvez Musharraf, has asked Pakistan to withdraw all its nationals allegedly fighting in Afghanistan

14 November

Condemning the UN sanctions against Afghanistan, the Jamaat-i-Islami, (JI) NWFP Pakistan, asked the US and UN not to victimise the war battered Afghans in the name of action against Osama bin Laden. During the two day meeting the JI called upon the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and Muslim Ummah to raise their voice against the sanctions.

14 November

The Taliban representative in Dubai, Azizur Rahman, Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, said that the UN sanctions will only hurt the Afghan people and not the Taliban and we are used to war and difficulties.

15 November

US-based Afghans staged a demonstration in front of the UN office in New York against the UN sanctions againsts Afghanistan. The demonstration arranged by the Islamic Centre was not in direct support of the Taliban but was against the UN sanctions. According to a spokesman for the demonstrators, the ban on the Afghanistan Airline will be harmful for middle class Afghans and it is not appropriate to put the whole of the country in trouble for the sake of Osama bin Laden. The UN should adopt other means to deal with the issue, demonstrators added.

15 November

The Clinton Administration is expected to maintain some kind of dialogue with the Taliban on US demands for the

extradition of suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden. The talks are expected to be conducted through the Taliban representative in New York.

15 November

The Taliban Supreme Leader, Mulla Mohammad Omar, alleged that the UN had become a vehicle for implementation of the US global agenda. The UN had lost its credibility and restoration of its image was a must to make the world a better place to live. Omar urged the Islamic countries not to forget the Muslim people of Afghanistan now that they were being subjected to economic sanctions.

15 November

Foreign Minister of Pakistan Abdul Sattar, said that Pakistan would continue to help Afghanistan financially and morally, but will not interfere in Afghanistan's internal Affairs.

15 November

Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan condemned attacks on UN offices in Afghanistan and reminded the Taliban of its responsibility to protect UN staff. Taliban demonstrators targeted UN property in Kandahar, Farah, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad.

16 November

The Taliban Supreme Leader, Mulla Mohammad Omar, called on people to stop protests against UN sanctions and instead pray for "God's wrath" to fall on those responsible.

18 November

Ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani has appointed Dr. Sadiq Mohammad as his special envoy to Pakistan in a bid to improve relations with the new leadership of Pakistan.

19 November

Erick de Mul, UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, deplored an air attack by the Taliban on the Opposition Panjsher valley, which killed 12 people and injuring 56.

21 November

The Taliban Foreign Minister, Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil, said the militia would not prevent the passage of aid convoys to the Panjsher, the key bastion of the Opposition Leader Ahmad Shah Masood. "From now on the UN can take humanitarian aid and there is no obstacle and problem on our part", he said. The decision was in response to the appeal by UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, Erick de Mul, during his visit to Kabul, Mutawakil added.

23 November

Afghans living in Washington staged a demonstration outside the White House against the imposition of sanctions on war-shattered Afghanistan.

DECEMBER

1 December

UN officials held talks with the senior leaders of the Taliban and the Northern Alliance to constitute a tripartite commission, comprised of the UN, Taliban and Opposition in order to decide about humanitarian activities, specially in the Panjsher valley where thousands of families are waiting immediate help.

1 December

Mulla Mohammad Omar accused UN Secretary General Kofi Annan of spreading "baseless and wrong propaganda". "We will be compelled to ask the UN officials to get into trucks and vehicles and take them to the front line and see for themselves that there are no children fighting", Omar warned in a statement issued from Kandahar.

1 December

A raging civil war, record opium production and massive systematic violations of basic human rights are conspiring against Afghan civilians and threaten Afghanistan's neighbours, Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a report. In an annual report on Afghanistan, Annan condemned what he called the complete disregard for the life and welfare of Afghan citizens as the Taliban and its Opposition fight for the remaining 10 percent of the country not under Taliban control.

He also cited the religious schools in Pakistan as the source for new Taliban fighters some as young as 14 and an increasing number of non-Afghan fighters taking part in actual combat as well as planing and logistical support of military offensive.

5 December

Uzbek officials have accused Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and the Chechen government of imparting training to hundreds of Uzbek youths to wage jihad in Uzbekistan. According to the Uzbek ambassador, the guerrilla's of Osama bin Laden were behind the terrorist attacks carried out in Uzbekistan.

6 December

Chechen envoys have managed to reach an agreement with the Taliban for President Aslan Maskhadov's government to reside in Afghanistan. According to Itar-Tass the two sides reached the agreement that "the Chechen government in exile will reside in Afghan territory controlled by the Taliban". The agreement came after a representative from Grozny visited Afghanistan.

7 December

In a message to the UN Security Council, Taliban's Foreign Minister, Mawlawi Wakil Ahmad Mutawakil, asked the UN not to delay any longer the formation of a special committee to evaluate the humanitarian and religious impacts of the UN sanctions. Many Afghans are to go to Saudi Arabia to perform Umra, a form of pilgrimage to Mecca; 250 Afghans have been

stranded at an airport in Saudi Arabia because of the UN sanctions as well, Mutawakal said.

8 December

Taliban would set up a commission to monitor foreign agencies working in Afghanistan. A meeting of the Taliban council of ministers in Kabul directed the Culture and Information Ministry to set up the commission to see whether the activities of foreign agencies conform to the rules of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Radio Shariat reported.

8 December

Pakistan former Chief Minister Sardar Mahtab Ahmad Khan, has condemned the government's decision to freeze Taliban accounts in accordance with the UN economic sanctions on Afghanistan.

8 December

Taliban have made a major political breakthrough by opening talks with one of their rivals Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, the chief of Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan, the London based Al-Hayat newspaper claimed.

9 December

The US bemoans that the prospects for peace in Afghanistan continue to be discouraging. In a statement issued at the Afghan Support Group meeting in Ottawa and later released in Washington, the US government said the Taliban's insistence on pursuing a military solution to the conflict has led over recent months to further dislocation of Afghan society.

10 December

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) staged a protest demonstration in front of the UN office and called upon all pro-democracy organisations of the world not to be mere spectators to the violations of human rights and the great tragedy in Afghanistan but raise a voice against the fundamentalists and prove their sincerity to the people, and particularly Women in practical manner.

10 December

With the return of Gen. Abdul Malik, the Opposition has strengthened its ranks against the Taliban. Malik has returned to Taloqan, provincial capital of Takhar Province and joined Masood. He has raised a 2000 strong fighting force and will open new fronts with the Taliban, a report said.

12 December

Taliban envoy to the UN, Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Mujahid, has said women in Afghanistan enjoy great respect and dignity and nobody can dare cast an evil eye on them. He said the UN General Assembly has signed the international human rights declaration fifty one years ago but the declaration had been provided to humanity by Islam in the light of Quran and Sunnah fourteen hundred years ago.

14 December

Taliban have invited Hilary Clinton to visit Afghanistan to find out the truth about rights for women in Afghanistan. A foreign ministry statement run by the Taliban said the US First Lady could come to Afghanistan and talk with local women to see for herself that there are no women rights violations in Taliban areas.

14 December

Taliban have good and cordial relations with the people and government of Pakistan and the UN sanctions would not effect it, said Taliban Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakel. So far as the implementation of the sanctions is concerned it applied to the member countries and Pakistan is also one of the UN member states, he added.

14 December

The Taliban government has dismissed reports that Chechen leaders planned to form a government in exile in Kabul. A foreign ministry statement dubbed reports which have appeared in the Russian mass media as Moscow's machinations, aimed at demoralising Chechen warriors. It pointed out that neither the Chechen authorities had contacted the Emirate of Afghanistan in this connection, nor was this report correct.

14 December

UN has asked Pakistan to submit a report on the implementation of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Afghanistan.

14 December

The three branches of Afghan National Bank in Pakistan are being closed down under the UN economic sanctions against Taliban in Afghanistan.

14 December

Pakistan Central Information Secretary and Deputy Speaker of the suspended NWFP Assembly has said that instead of imposing economic sanctions against Afghanistan the UN and US should halt supply of arms and ammunition to the warring factions.

14 December

According to a US report a dozen people linked to alleged Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden who were planning, New Year attacks against Americans have been arrested in the Middle East in the past two weeks. The detentions were related to a world wide alert issued by the State Department US citizens about possible attacks during month of Ramazan.

14 December

The Taliban foreign Minister Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil dismissed the US warning of possible terrorist attacks against its citizens as "propaganda". "We informed the US then and we say again today that Osama is not doing anything and it is

not possible for him to do anything to another country from Afghanistan" Muttawakil added.

17 December

Taliban police are jailing men who trim their beards for up to 10 days. Maulwi Mohammad Salim Haqqani, Minister for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention Vice, was quoted as saying that offenders are kept in a detention centre at the downtown ministry.

18 December

The US has praised the arrest of alleged followers of Osama bin Laden by the Pakistani intelligence agencies and hoped for more such gestures from Islamabad to curb terrorism. The government of Pakistan had reportedly arrested a few alleged followers of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden.

19 December

The Secretary General Human Rights Wing of International Development Department of Canada, Hunter McGill, has said that besides mines-sweeping programmes, Ottawa would continue humanitarian aid to Afghanistan in the education and health sectors.

21 December

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami called for the formation of a coalition government in Afghanistan to restore peace to the country. "An independent and stable government in Afghanistan is needed to re-establish peace and stability in the region", Khatami said during a meeting with Burhanuddin Rabbani, who visited Tehran.

26 December

The Taliban refused to allow its soil for any commando action for the release of about 150 passengers from the Indian hijacked plane currently at the Kandahar airport, southern province of Afghanistan.

26 December

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar warned the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane to either surrender unconditionally or leave Afghanistan.

27 December

The UN team led by the UN Co-ordinator, Erik de Mul, arrived in Kandahar to hold talks with the hijackers of the Indian Airline which was hijacked on 24 December. Negotiation between hijackers and the UN mediation team came to an end following the statement by the Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh that the UN team was not playing a mediatory role to solve the problem.

27 December

The first direct contact between the Indian and Taliban government was established as ambassador of the two country in Pakistan held a meeting in Islamabad. Indian High

Commissioner G. Parthasarthy met Mulla Said Mohammad Haqqani Afghanistan Ambassador to Pakistan to take a step further in the ongoing interaction between Kabul and New Delhi over the hijacking drama.

27 December

A Taliban team is visiting NWFP to bolster support among the religious schools and to strengthen pro- Mullah Omar religious elements in Peshawar. The delegation is visiting Frontier Province to muster support for the ideals policies of Afghan Supreme Leader Mulla Mohammad Omar.

28 December

The Afghan Refugees based in US have condemned UN economic sanctions against Afghanistan. They convened a meeting to discuss the implications of the US and UN economic curbs on Afghanistan.

28 December

Taliban warned they would storm a hijacked Indian airliner if the captors carried out a threat to start killing the 160 hostages on board. "This warning was given to the hijackers after they told the control tower they had tied the hands and feet of two hostages and that they would kill them", said Taliban Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakel. "They were clearly told Taliban commandos will storm the plane if there was any violence or unusual noises heard from the plane" he added.

28 December

Indian Civil Aviation Director General H. S Khola acknowledged that the Taliban authorities in Kandahar were "doing their utmost" to take proper care of hostages and their sanitation. So far no breakthrough in talks between Indian negotiators and the hijackers of an Indian Airlines plane.

28 December

The Afghan embassy in Islamabad has issued a statement warning those countries engaged in "cowardly and covert operations against Afghanistan to learn from the humiliation Russia had to suffer at the hands of the valiant Afghan people".

28 December

The hijackers of an Indian plane have demanded the released of 35 jailed Muslim militants and \$200 million dollars in exchange for the 160 people aboard, Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh said.

distributions after having covered 95 percent of the needs in the worst hit area.

18 February

WFP Programme allocated 55 MT of wheat, beans and biscuits to 400 quake-affected families in Logar and Wardak. UNICEF, UNHCR and HABITAT are sending shelter materials to the quake-hit areas while WHO sends medicines to treat the injured people.

19 February

The Taliban government decided to set up a commission to streamline transportation and distribution of relief assistance among quake affectees in Wardak, Logar and Ghazni Provinces.

20 February

Taliban signed an agreement with the Norwegian Government according to which 10 educational institutions for females will be established in Afghanistan. The Taliban are likely to lift The ban on female education in some parts of the country and have developed very positive attitude towards females, said a Taliban official.

23 February

Assistant Commissioner of the UN High Commission for Refugees said that due to lack of resources and financial assistance from the world countries the UNHCR is facing severe difficulties in provision of relief to help more than two million Afghan refugees, residing in various parts of the world particularly in Pakistan and Iran.

MARCH

8 March

ICRC sent 1.2 Mt. of pesticides for 120,000 farmers in Parwan and Kapisa Provinces. According to an ICRC spokesperson the consignment was part of a vast agricultural programme that it had launched throughout Afghanistan for the current year to assist one million beneficiaries directly and indirectly.

9 March

Iran dispatched medical aid to Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan Province that recently experienced mysterious diseases.

11 March

US allocated US\$2 million for de-mining operation in Afghanistan for the current fiscal year. US Ambassador, Donal Steinberg, said the US assistance to Afghanistan for de-mining purposes would be made through UNOCHA.

13 March

UNOCHA announced that UN international staff would begin a gradual process of return from 16 March to their respective posts inside Afghanistan.

17 March

UNDCP Country Office Afghanistan underlined the need to establish appropriate mechanisms by which credit could be targeted for the most vulnerable, who currently have few alternatives for obtaining credit other than through cultivation of opium in Afghanistan. These mechanisms would need to be context specific and should be identified through the active participation of the community, particularly the most vulnerable, the report added.

17 March

UNHCR and the NWFP authorities are in a fix over the proposed plan of establishing a single university for Afghan refugees in Peshawar after the Taliban leaders declared that they would not allow enrolment of female students in any section of this institution. Taliban Minister for Higher Education Mawlawi Hamidullah Numani stressed that such a university could be considered a subordinate institution of the Afghan Education Ministry in Kabul.

21 March

The head of UNICEF in Afghanistan Dr. Eric Donnelly said that the UN would be pleased to start assisting schools in Kabul and other parts of the country. Funds are available and UNICEF is just waiting for a report from the Taliban Education Ministry that would provide details about the needs and requirements under the conditions envisaged in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Taliban last year.

21 March

A UN report said that opium production is a vital source of income for the poor people of Afghanistan, therefore, it has further intensified the campaign against drugs in the country. According to the chief of UNDCP, the basic needs of the Afghans should be kept in mind while carrying our campaign. He added that the only way of controlling the drug problem in Afghanistan was to provide loans to the people.

25 March

According to the UNHCR annual report, some 107,000 Afghans were repatriated from both Pakistan and Iran to Afghanistan in 1998.

APRIL

1 April

Around 96,000 kg of sacrificial meat was distributed among thousands of Afghan families in Peshawar.

9 April

The UNHCR sent 10 trucks of flour to Afghanistan. It will be distributed at subsidised rates.

13 April

About 1,200 Afghan refugees, responding to a UN voluntary repatriation programme, left for Afghanistan. Every family was

SECURITY DEVELOPMENT

JANUARY

2 January

A land mine exploded in Wazir Akbar Khan near a military compound in Kabul, killing two children and wounding three others.

4 January

An Afghan housewife was gunned down when unidentified robbers attacked her in her house in Peshawar.

4 January

A man facing the death penalty for murdering his wife was pardoned by his in-laws in southern Afghanistan's Ghazni Province. It was the first time such pardon had happened since the Taliban imposed Islamic Sharia law.

5 January

Taliban chopped off the hand of a thief in Jawzjan Province.

6 January

Taliban announced cancellation of holidays for its employees during Eid days. The Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar told all military, security and other authorities to remain on their jobs.

7 January

The Taliban released 264 Opposition prisoners to allow them to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with their families. Report said 200 prisoners were released from Kabul's Pul-i-Charki prison and the remaining 64 were freed from the Taliban jail in Northern Kunduz Province.

10 March

The house of Toryalai Latif, a former advisor in the ousted Afghan Government of Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani, was attacked by unknown people and his daughter shot dead. Toryalai Latif, who served as an adviser in the Information Ministry in Kabul, survived the attempt.

12 January

The wife, son and servant of commander Abdul Haq, a former Afghan mujahid, were murdered by unidentified people in their house in Hayatabad, Peshawar. In another incident, former commander Sayed Agha Reesh during the communist regime in the 1980's, was gunned down on the Kohat Road in Peshawar.

12 January

An Afghan businessman, Mohammed Bashir, was killed by unidentified gunmen and three border guards were taken

hostage in the village of Rokhak south-east of Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

13 January

Seven Afghan drug traffickers were shot dead by Iranian soldiers at the Iranian border.

15 January

Six Taliban fighters had their right hands and left feet cut off for highway robbery and a tank pushed over a stone wall on a man for sodomy.

15 January

Ahmad Shah Masood freed 58 Taliban prisoners. According to the report, ICRC flew 20 of them to Kabul and the other 38 would be driven to their native northern home areas.

15 January

Pakistani police launched a crackdown on illegal immigrants staying in different areas of Rawalpindi and rounded up 33 Afghan refugees.

18 January

Khairadmand, Governor of Badakhshan, a former key commander of Hezb-e-Islami, was recently killed by Ahmad Shah Masood forces, said a Taliban official.

21 January

Two Afghans were arrested in Shah Kas village in Jamrud, Khyber Agency, in connection with a firing incident in NWFP.

21 January

Six persons were killed and four sustained injuries in a clash between the Taliban and villagers in the Gurbaz area Khost Province. Fighting accrued during an egg-breaking competition on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and the two sides fired at each other with heavy arms.

30 January

Pakistan authorities arrested a Tunisian national suspected of being a close associate of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden. The Tunisian, identified as al-Babar Habib was arrested at Karachi airport while he was planning to travel to Afghanistan.

FEBRUARY

7 February

An Afghan was killed during an exchange of fire between the Pakistani Police and residences of Nasir Bagh refugee camp.

12 February

Russian border guards killed two Afghans in an exchange of fire after they tried to cross from Afghanistan into Tajikistan.

13 February

Two murderers were publicly executed in Kabul by blood relatives of the victims.

13 February

A member of the Taliban was killed in an armed attack by four masked men in Karachi.

27 February

Taliban and the Opposition released 11 prisoners each in an exchange supervised by the ICRC.

MARCH**12 March**

Bangladesh police arrested a suspected Afghan in connection with a bombing in the south-western town of Jessore.

18 March

The Council of Understanding and National Unity of Afghanistan (CUNUA) expressed concern over the growing number of terrorist attacks on its members and called on the Pakistan Government to ensure security of Afghans.

24 March

Taliban Opposition offered to release more than 1,000 Taliban prisoners to push the tentative Afghan peace process further.

24 March

Taliban and the Opposition freed 25 prisoners each in a swap that took place at Hussiankot front-line between the two sides north of Kabul.

25 March

Taliban executed two murderers publicly in Pule Khumri city of Baghlan Province in the presence of thousands of people

APRIL**1 April**

Prominent Afghan commander Jehanzen Khan a close aide of Haji Qadeer, was gunned down near Danish Abad, University Town of Peshawar by unknown gunmen.

1 April

Pakistani police arrested the Afghan refugees religious leader who announced celebration of Eid-ul-Azha with Saudi Arabia. The NWFP Chief Minister and Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees had earlier ordered him not to celebrate Eid with Saudi Arabia but to follow the government of Pakistan instructions.

1 April

Pakistan has sealed its border with Afghanistan's Western provinces of Khost, Paktiya and Paktika and barred Afghans from crossing into North Waziristan of Pakistan.

5 April

Taliban are forcing Hazaras to flee their home Province of Bamyam following attacks by Taliban troops, said witnesses.

6 April

A landmine exploded in Kabul and seriously wounded two children while planting flower, witness said

11 April

Taliban and the Opposition each released four prisoners in an exchange organised by ICRC.

20 April

A Taliban Commander, Sayed Sangarmal Bacha's house has been attacked by unidentified armed men, leaving two persons dead and the house reduced to ashes in Ooghoz Bagh area of distract Asmar, Kunar Province.

26 April

One of two giant ancient stone Buddha has been badly damaged during the heavy fighting and bombardment in Bamyam city. Taliban soldiers fired a tank twice at the smaller Budda hitting it at the face and groin. According to the reports 70 percent of the smaller Budda has been destroyed.

26 April

Taliban publicly flogged a man accused of sodomy in the western province of Herat.

28 April

Taliban publicly executed three men jointly accused of murder in the central province of Ghazni, radio Shariat reported.

MAY**2 May**

Taliban Opposition fired three rockets into Kabul wounding at least three people.

11 May

Three rockets landed in north-eastern of Kabul; no casualties have been reported.

13 May

Four Afghans were shot dead by Russian border guards as they attempted to cross the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

14 May

Taliban administration in Afghanistan foiled an attempt to smuggle arms and ammunition to Lahore in Pakistan and arrested a courier.

18 May

Taliban Opposition accused the Taliban of massacring hundreds of civilian families since they recaptured Bamyan. Residential houses in Bamyan had been burned to the ground and a terror campaign against ethnic Hazaras had been extended to neighbouring Yakaulang and surrounding districts in Bamyan city.

18 May

Based on a report, 27 Afghans described drug traffickers were killed during an extensive Iranian military operation in the eastern Iranian region of Torbat-e-Heydarieh.

19 May

More than 200 houses in the west of Bamyan city have been burnt by Taliban troops after capturing the town.

20 May

One person was killed and several injured when at least 12 rockets hit residential areas close to Kabul airport.

21 May

The right hands of four men, all convicted thieves, were cut off and strung from lamp posts in Kabul streets as a warning against future crime, local residents reported.

21 May

Nine rockets hit Kabul, no casualties have been reported.

23 May

Taliban rulers arrested 600 Hazaras living in western Herat Provinces. Taliban Opposition has asked the UN and international human rights groups to intercede and investigate their claims of a crackdown by the Taliban on Shia Muslims.

27 May

An Afghan national who was roaming in the prohibited area of Peshawar Airport, along with his companions, was shot dead by the Pakistani Airport Security Force.

27 May

Taliban commander, Abdul Rahman, defected to the Opposition along with 50 armed men in Dare-Suf, Samangan.

JUNE**1 June**

Amnesty International backed claims that Taliban guards systematically killed innocent civilians after they recaptured the central city of Bamyan. The human rights watchdog also

said troops had brutally beaten ordinary people in the city and hit out at the international community for witnessing the massacres of civilians without making any meaningful effort to protect them.

2 June

Taliban Opposition said 25 Taliban were killed when their vehicle hit a land mine in northern Kunduz Province.

4 June

Taliban and the Opposition exchanged 25 prisoners. According to the report the Taliban handed over 13 men and the Opposition 12 men at a northern battle zone.

6 June

The Interior Ministry of the Taliban has asked the general public to help them in searching and arresting the former communist leaders and workers of Afghanistan or those who had worked against the Islamic Government.

7 June

Opposition offered to release more than 1,000 Taliban prisoners in a bid to push the tentative Afghan peace process further, an Opposition spokesman said.

8 June

Opposition has handed over to Taliban the bodies of 12 prominent Taliban commanders killed in action in Samangan.

12 June

One person was killed while three others, including two police personnel and an ex-Governor of Afghanistan, received serious bullet injuries in different incidents in Quetta, Pakistan.

15 June

Based on a report the Taliban claimed that more than 400 armed Opposition fighters surrendered in the central province of Bamyan. A Taliban official said all the fighters of the Shia Hezb-i-Wahdat which had fled to the mountains during the Taliban seizure of Bamyan last month, had surrendered.

15 June

Two persons were killed and three others injured when unidentified forces fired rockets on the eastern city of Jalalabad, Taliban sources reported.

15 June

Taliban released 50 prisoners of war. According to the Taliban official Abdul Hai Mutmain 50 war prisoners, who had been captured in the Andkhoi area of Northern Afghanistan were released and handed over to religious scholars of Faryab Province.

17 June

Pakistani police raided the office of two Afghan Factions at a refugee camp near Peshawar and arrested four Afghans. The police seized wireless sets and electronic equipment from the office belonging to the Hezb-i-Islami of former Afghan premier Gulbaddin Hekmatyar and the National Liberation Front of former Afghan President Sibghatullah Mujaddadi.

19 June

ICRC would scale back its operations after 10 staff members were severely beaten and robbed, an ICRC spokesman said. According to the report about 30 expatriate ICRC staff would be withdrawn, more than half the ICRC's foreign contingent in Afghanistan, and its activities would be limited to life saving operations only

JULY**6 July**

Russian border guards killed three men trying to cross into Tajikistan from Afghanistan.

10 July

Taliban Supreme Leader Mullah Mohammad Omar announced that the security of all Americans living inside Afghanistan would be safe and guaranteed.

15 July

An Afghan politician Abdul Ahad Karzai, linked to Afghanistan's former King Zahir Shah, was assassinated in Quetta, Pakistan. He was gunned down by two assailants as he came out of a mosque after prayers.

19 July

Three Taliban commanders Majeed-e-Padsha, Abdul Rahman Habasha, Mullah Murad and 50 of their men have been killed in fighting in the northern Province of Samangan and Jawzjan.

26 July

A delegation of the National Commission of Human Rights of Afghanistan called on Dominic Jerney, the First Secretary of British High Commission in Islamabad to discuss the state of human rights in Afghanistan. The delegation which was led by Abdul Naseer and Mohammad Firdus-ud-Din deliberated upon the issues concerning women's education, and problems being faced by Afghan technocrats in Pakistan.

28 July

Taliban released 200 Opposition prisoners. Taliban Supreme Leader Mulla Mohammad Omar ordered the release in a special decree issued in Kandahar and the prisoners were handed over to the ICRC.

28 July

The EU condemned the brutal murder of former Afghan parliamentarian Abdul Ahad Karzai and stated their concerns for the growing number of similar assassinations of Afghan political figures residing in Pakistan. It urged the Pakistan Government to ensure that all Afghans resident in Pakistan received full protection from such attacks.

AUGUST**1 August**

A big demonstration was staged in Miramshah, Pakistan by Jamiat Tulaba-i-Islam against the US and in support of Saudi dissident, Osama bin Laden and the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan. They said no American or their agents would be safe in Pakistan from the hands of the Waziristan tribesmen in such an eventuality.

1 August

A big demonstration was staged in Jalalabad and Khost to show solidarity with Saudi dissident, Osama bin Laden, and condemn US plan to force the Taliban to expel him from Afghanistan.

6 August

Russian military officials deployed at Tajik-Afghan border seized weapons from a military group of Afghan Opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood which had illegally entered Tajikistan.

10 August

The Opposition had started burying hundreds of dead Taliban fighters after they failed to reach an agreement to send their remains home through the ICRC.

11 August

A close associate of Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Suleman, hailing from Jeddah, died of cancer at Hayatabad Medical Complex in Peshawar.

16 August

The Taliban arrested thousands of refugees who fled Kabul after recent fighting. Taliban began a security crackdown with the arrests of 2,000 people at Khair Khana on the northern outskirts of Kabul. Several sources said the arrests had forced people into hiding amid fears they would be denounced as anti-Islamic and jailed.

17 August

One thousand ethnic Tajik men are being held by the Taliban in Kabul after fleeing fighting to the north of Kabul, UNHCR reported.

29 August

Taliban swept through newly captured areas north of Kabul destroying irrigation canals, wells and orchards. They destroyed prime agriculture land and infrastructure on the Shamali plains to prevent Opposition soldiers from using the area to fight the Taliban, said Taliban Agriculture Minister Mawlawi Abdul Latif Mansoor.

28 August

Two Taliban Provincial Governors Mullah Akhtare Qandahari and Arif Khan were killed in an explosion in the town of Baghlan in northern Afghanistan, claimed Opposition.

28 August

Around 160,000 people in north-eastern Afghanistan have been displaced because of the recent outbreak of fighting between the Taliban and Opposition, said the spokesman for the UNHCR Kris Janowski.

SEPTEMBER**1 September**

Seven Afghan's were killed during a military operation near the Afghan-Iran border.

6 September

Hundreds of people have been detained in a continuing Taliban investigation into last month's massive Kandahar truck bomb blast.

8 September

Pakistan law enforcement agencies arrested six Pakistani youth in Torkham who were on their way back from training camps run by the Osama bin Laden.

9 September

Three Afghan nationals, including a leader of Hizb-i-Islami, Haji Shah Wazir, were killed in several incidents in Peshawar.

10 September

The Taliban arrested two Pakistani journalists in the eastern Province of Kunar on the way back to Pakistan.

13 September

The Taliban confirmed that the governor of Jauzjan Province, Maulavi Wali Jan, was kidnapped by the Opposition. According to the Taliban spokesman, Mawlawi Abdul Hai Mutmaen, an Opposition commander Abdul Alucharik had conveyed to the Taliban governor that he along with his supporters wanted to surrender to the Taliban in Gusbandi district of Sare-pul Province, but it was a mock defection as the commander kidnapped the governor along with a commander.

15 September

According to reports, a powerful explosion occurred at an arms and ammunition depot in "Leave Char" Fourth Garrison at Farm Hada, Jalalabad, leaving three Taliban personal Shah Rehman, Salahuddin and an unidentified person seriously injured.

17 September

Abdul Alucharik, released the governor of Jauzjan Province, Maulavi Mohammed Wali, along with his seven colleagues in a swap for 22 POWs.

23 September

An Afghan was shot dead by an unknown person at Chatha Bakhtawar in Islamabad, Pakistan.

23 September

US officials and Pakistani agencies have received information of possible terrorist activity against US installations in Islamabad, Pakistan. The source said security agencies have been tipped off that terrorists are planning to target US installations in Islamabad with explosive concealed in a car and the man believed to be the mastermind of the attack is presently in Punjab, Pakistan.

27 September

Pakistani Police arrested four alleged terrorists in a raid at an Afghan refugee camp in Kalabagh, NWFP.

OCTOBER**4 October**

Roadside dacoits on the main national highways in the Taliban controlled areas, especially Kabul-Kandahar and Kandahar-Herat, are on the rise making it unsafe for people to travel. The report said that there has been an alarming rise in the harassment of travellers, and exposed the authorities inability to maintain law and order in their areas.

5 October

Fire broke out in the office of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) in Rodat district of Nangarhar Province in eastern Afghanistan. The report said the fire caused damage to the building and the medicine stored there. The Taliban and the SCA officials are busy investigating the incident but so far no responsibility has been fixed and no arrests have been made.

9 October

The Taliban accused Pakistan law enforcement agencies of harassing Afghan refugees and arresting a large number of them, including students of religious schools. During one week a large number of refugees have been arrested in NWFP and Baluchistan.

9 October

At least seven people were killed and around 15 injured in a bomb explosion near the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif. The explosion took place at Qila Zeeni, 6 kilometers west of Mazar city, when Taliban fighters were loading arms and explosive material in a vehicle.

11 October

Pakistan authorities arrested 22 Afghan nationals; the majority of them are reportedly Taliban, who crossed into North Waziristan on 12 October.

23 October

Haji Ahmad Noorzai, a former Afghan commander, was gunned down by some unidentified gunman in Chaman in Baluchistan, Pakistan.

NOVEMBER**1 November**

The Taliban administration in Afghanistan have closed down alleged terrorist training camps in certain areas under their control and disarmed several dozen Arabs and around 200 Pakistanis in the suburbs of the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, a commander of the former Eastern Shura Hazrat Ali, said. Training camps in Nangarhar, Paktia and Kunduz areas were already closed down and heavy weapons and ammunition were collected from non-Afghan militants.

1 November

The Pakistan authorities have tightened security on the Pak-Afghan border along the tribal belt, in order to stop defaulters from fleeing aboard.

10 November

Thousands of demonstrators in southern Afghanistan Kandahar province attacked UN office with stones and bricks and burned the US flags to protest upcoming UN sanctions against the Taliban army.

11 November

Thousands of protesters took to the streets in two major Afghan cities, Kunduz and Herat, to condemn the UN sanctions which are due to be imposed on the Taliban.

12 November

A powerful bomb exploded in Kabul wounding at least three people. The explosion damaged the car of Taliban leader Amir Khan Muttaqi which was parked outside the main Wazir Akbar Khan mosque. Muttaqi was inside the mosque at the time of blast, but his driver and two people passing by were wounded.

14 November

Security Agencies in Islamabad have arrested several Afghan refugees in connection with the rocket attacks on the US Embassy in Islamabad.

14 November

Taliban guards used gunfire to try to disperse thousands of angry Afghans protesting against UN sanctions on Afghanistan for failing to hand over Osama bin Laden. The protesters broke into a UN office and marched through the streets of Kabul shouting anti-American slogans. The office of UNHCR was broken into and some computers and windows were damaged. The crowd of mostly government workers and students also chanted that the UN was a puppet of the US.

14 November

The Taliban have arrested two Arabs in Kabul who were providing information to their intelligence agencies about Osama bin Laden, diplomatic sources in Islamabad said.

15 November

A number of people, including some Taliban soldiers, were injured as Afghans staged a violent protest in Jalalabad to condemn UN sanction on Afghanistan. Taliban soldiers were injured due to stone pelting, as the Taliban did not allow the protesters to storm the UN office, the report stated.

15 November

UN staffs in Kabul have stepped up security and are staying indoors after violent protests in Kabul. Thousands of demonstrators attacked UN buildings and the former US embassy in Kabul, smashing window panes and computers and burning flags.

16 November

The Taliban had promised compensation for the damage caused to UN property by demonstrators in several Afghanistan cities and expressed regret for the incidents, said Erick de Mul, UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan.

18 November

The UN staff in Afghanistan began normal operations again after days of tension and rioting left workers locked indoors for protection. Erick de Mul, UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan, said, he was satisfied with his talks with the Taliban and their guarantees that the incidents of the last several days will not be repeated.

20 November

Ten people are reported to have been killed and dozens of others injured as fighting between two tribes in Paktia Province raged over the ownership of land.

20 November

Four workers of WFP were abducted and beaten by unidentified people in the Saighan area of Bamyan Province.

22 November

Iranian commandos killed 16 Afghan armed drug traffickers in a shutout in north-eastern Iran and freed four Iranian hostages, said a report.

24 November

A prominent Opposition commander of the eastern zone, Haji Zabib Zahir was released after spending nearly one year in a Taliban prison.

24 November

A top Opposition commander, Najmuddin Wasiq, has been killed in an ambush by his rivals in Takhar Province.

28 November

A UN team visited the frontlines north of Kabul to assess the security situation before moving humanitarian convoys to the Opposition-held Panjsher valley. "The team was sent to the New Road to assess security demining and unexploded ordinance", Raz Mohammad, acting head of the UN mission in Kabul said.

DECEMBER**2 December**

Ahmad Shah Masood escaped yet another attempt on his life while his two aides were killed in an attack near Ashkamich in Takhar Province. Report said Masood's two aides Abdullah and Ayub Khan died on the spot while a foreign journalist received serious injuries in the attack.

5 December

Several people were wounded when a Taliban small arms depot exploded, scattering live fire into nearby residential areas.

7 December

Taliban released 450 prisoners from Kabul's main jail as a gesture of Ramadan.

11 December

Both Taliban and Opposition stopped fighting to observe the sanctity of Ramadan. A spokesman of the Taliban Maulana Masoom Jinnah, said we will not initiate fighting during Ramadan.

11 December

The Afghan elders and public opinion makers, settled in various part of the NWFP and tribal areas, have expressed grave concern over crackdown against Afghan nationals and

demanding the Pakistan government stop such action without any further delay.

12 December

Three persons were killed when two rival Afghan groups exchanged fire at Jalaozai refugees camp.

13 December

Hundred of prisoners are languishing in unhygienic and miserable conditions in Pul-i-Charkhi jail in Kabul. According to an Afghan prisoner the living conditions at the jail were below international standard. There are more than 2,000 prisoners, majority arrested on mere suspicion of pro-Opposition supporters.

16 December

An Afghan national was killed and three others were injured when a grenade exploded in Karachi, Pakistan.

19 December

Taliban Opposition released 17 Taliban prisoners, including two commanders, as a goodwill gesture an Opposition spokesman said.

18 December

Following the killing of a Pakistani Finance Ministry Official, the Islamabad police launched a crackdown on the Afghan refugees in the capital, arresting some 200.

21 December

Taliban police have punished 39 beard trimmers in Kabul.

22 December

Some 300 mud houses of Afghan refugees were razed to the ground during a joint operation launched by Pakistani Military and police at Nasir Bagh camp to vacate the area which was falling within the firing range.

22 December

Taliban authorities have allegedly executed two Arab nationals in Kandahar on charges of espionage against Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden. So far Taliban officials have denied execution of the Arabs and termed such reports as false and concocted.

OTHER NEWS

JANUARY

7 January

Over 4,000 vehicles owned by Afghan refugees plying in NWFP have been asked by the Pakistan government to pay tax.

11 January

Seven Afghans, including women and children, received burn injuries when leaking gas caught fire in Dalazak area on the outskirts of Peshawar.

13 January

Four gunmen, including two Arab and two Pakistanis, close associate of Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, have been killed in rocket attacks at Qila Murad Beg, north of Kabul.

14 January

An 11 year old boy was kidnapped by unidentified gunmen from Hayatabad, Peshawar.

15 January

The Federal Investigation Agency FIA of Pakistan discharged 59 Afghans including women and children from a Saudi Arabia - bound Emirates flight. According to the report they had been carrying fake visas, a scandal-made by a Pakistani Travel agent who had brought them to Islamabad from Peshawar and disappeared after leaving them at the parking area.

24 January

Osama bin Laden is planning to construct the world's second biggest mosque in Kandahar reported BBC.

FEBRUARY

1 February

Four Afghan fighters were shot dead in occupied Kashmir, said a Pakistani official

10 February

Some 8,000 Afghan refugees, residing in Iran, have repatriated to Zaranj district, Nimroz Province in Afghanistan, reported UNHCR.

16 February

The Turkmenistan Government released 192 Afghan nationals who were imprisoned in the Central Asian country for different offences. The 192 freed Afghans were handed over to Taliban officials by the Turkmen authorities at Torghundi border town. Reports said there are around 4,000 Afghans serving a number of jail terms in Turkmenistan.

19 February

Russian border guards killed two Afghans attempting to illegally enter Tajikistan.

20 February

Electricity supply to a large number of consumers in the Kacha Garhi camp for Afghan refugees in Peshawar was disconnected by the Wapda authorities.

21 February

Taliban destroyed 24 private heroin-producing refineries in eastern Nangarhar Province. Reports said heroin processing laboratories had been operating in Achin, Shinwar and Khogyani districts in Nangarhar Province.

22 February

Taliban have temporarily closed down four Kabul restaurants because they were operating during prayer time, reported residents.

23 February

An Afghan Human Rights Activist Abdul Nasir Khan has disappeared during a visit to the earthquake effected areas in Wardak and Logar Provinces.

23 February

UNDCP reported that Afghan raw opium production in 1998 rose nine percent from the previous year to 2,200 MT with the planted areas covering 63,000 hectares.

MARCH

1 March

A Taliban official said that US criticism of the Taliban human rights record was unjustified and defended the use of public executions and amputations to enforce law and order in the country.

3 March

Taliban soldiers used knives to slash the leather jackets of young men in Kabul; saying leather jackets were prohibited under Islam.

12 March

Taliban in Afghanistan have set up an apartheid system of intolerance and discrimination with regard to women. It is tantamount to veritable apartheid against women on the basis of specious interpretations of Islam, said a UN special report on religious intolerance.

15 March

The Taliban ordered property and car dealers to repaint their brightly coloured signs a more staid blue and white, said the Justice Minister.

21 March

Taliban banned the annual Nawroz celebrations as an anti-Islamic practice and did not allow revellers to gather in other parts of the capital (Kabul) to mark the celebrations.

21 March

Pakistan authorities seized 2.7 kg of heroin from two Afghan Haj pilgrims over the past 24 hours in a stepped-up campaign against drug trafficking to Saudi Arabia.

26 March

At least 50 huts were turned into ashes and two persons injured when fire broke out in an Afghan refugee camp at Sohrab Goth in Karachi, Pakistan.

MAY**1 May**

Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries on earth: 223 square km of the total 26,000 square km of cultivable land in Afghanistan is still mined. UN figures show intensive demining has cut casualties by half. Farmers run an every day risk of losing their limbs, cattle and even their lives as they work the land amid shifting frontlines, said a UN official.

14 May

Taliban have started destroying poppy crop in the country's southern region (Kandahar), where 64 percent of the country's total opium was produced last year. Kandahar Governor Mawlawi Muhammad Hassan Rehmani said his country was ready to destroy poppy procured by it provided it is assisted in repair of its agriculture sector, improvement and maintenance of infrastructure. According to the UNDCP under the agreement Taliban will destroy 20 percent of the poppy crop and the UN in return will carry out development work and provide seeds for other crops.

16 May

The special reporter of UN Human Rights for Afghanistan, Dr Kamal Hussain, has expressed concern over extra-judicial killings in Afghanistan. The war had left physical and psychological impacts on the Afghans and the human rights situation in Afghanistan could not improve unless peace returned to the country, he added.

16 May

Cirrhosis, a deadly liver disease, has claimed more than 150-200 lives in Herat Province. According to the UN report the basic cause of the disease was a poisonous shrub that grows

alongside the wheat crop and when the people eat the wheat bread, they suffer from the disease.

19 May

In the wake of the NWFP government's decision regarding ejection of Afghan families from Nasir Bagh refugees camp, some 100 families left for Afghanistan. The families assisted by the UNHCR have been provided three months of wheat and Rs 5,000 for each family.

JUNE**1 June**

A grand meeting of Pakistani religious scholars and Afghanistan's ruling Taliban in the southern city of Kandahar urged Pakistan to enforce Islamic Shariah in the country. The meeting attended by 1800 Pakistani ulema and students from religious institutions, through a resolution, announced that Taliban could become active in Pakistan if Islamic Shariah was not enforced in the country.

21 June

A UN team conducted an aerial survey of the devastating forest fire in north-eastern Kunar Province.

26 June

The Taliban army used three military helicopters to drop thousands of pamphlets on the capital of Kabul warning against drugs. Poppy cultivation and narcotics manufacturing is banned all over Afghanistan the pamphlets warned. Those people who violated the ban will be punished according to Shariat.

JULY**20 July**

Fearing US attack on Afghanistan, Arab families living near the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad have shifted to other safe places in Pakistan.

23 July

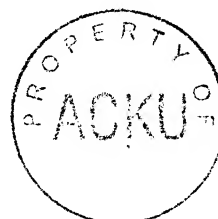
Twenty three detained Afghan immigrants launched a hunger strike in pursuit of their demand to be given political asylum by Hungarian authorities.

26 July

Iranian troops killed 25 drug traffickers in clashes near the border with Afghanistan and seized one MT of drugs.

AUGUST**15 August**

Hundreds of Afghans made a procession outside the Toronto City Hall to protest against Pakistan's backing of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the indirect aggression of Pakistan.



22 August

Gunmen opened fire on the Pakistan Embassy in Teheran, Iran, seriously wounding one policeman and lightly injuring another.

SEPTEMBER

6 September

Two Iraqi nationals, M. Talib Alla Aloomi and Amer Sher Mohammed Aloo, were arrested by Pakistani military forces on the Pak-Afghan border at Torkham, because they had no valid travel documents while attempting to cross into Afghanistan.

8 September

Nineteen children drowned in the swollen Panjsher River trying to escape fighting between the Taliban and Opposition forces. The bodies of the 19 children were washed up into an irrigation canal that flows into the Panjsher River, an Opposition reported.

21 September

A German national, was arrested at the Peshawar International Airport by the Airport Security Force on charges of illegally carrying foreign and local currency to Afghanistan.

22 September

Pakistan has banned travel to Afghanistan through Torkham border without legal documents, according to the authorities in the Khyber Agency.

27 September

The Jalalabad-Torkham Road remained blocked for more than five hours as the Taliban and rival tribes in Nangarhar Province traded fire, killing two people and injuring six others.

OCTOBER

5 October

The Taliban demanded the International Olympic Committee revise a decision which effectively barred Afghan athletes from competing at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. The report said the IOC announced that it no longer recognised the Afghan Olympic Committee run by the Taliban.

9 October

An Iranian blamed the Taliban for the kidnapping of three Portuguese journalists on the border between Iran and Afghanistan.

20 October

The Taliban acknowledged large scale poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has become a crucial international issue but complained of a lack of foreign funds to curb the production.

NOVEMBER

9 November

Afghanistan has more than two hundred thousand land mine victims according to the Afghan Campaign to Ban Landmines (ACBL). According to the latest ACBL's newsletter landmines kill or maim two to twelve people daily in Afghanistan and almost fifty percent of the mine victims die due to the lack of medical facilities in the early stage of injuries.

10 November

A major earthquake shook a remote region of north-eastern Afghanistan. The quake struck the village of Zebak, some 90 kilometre's south-east of Faizabad in Badakhshan province. A French observatory put the intensity at 6.5. The tremors originating from the Hindukush range in north-eastern Afghanistan were felt in northern Pakistan as well as in India.

16 November

A mother of seven accused of murdering her husband two years ago was publicly executed at the Kabul sports stadium.

25 November

Over 3,000 Afghan refugees have been forcibly deported from Iran during last two weeks, UNHCR reported. The deportees reported that they were regularly picked up in the streets or in their homes and brought to detention camps from where they are then deported.

DECEMBER

15 December

The impacts of 20-year-long fighting and hostilities in Afghanistan could be ascertained from the fact that hundreds of children have never attended a school. According to UN in Kabul there are around 8,000 children in the ex-Soviet compound which houses around 16,000 internally displaced people from north of Kabul. As the Taliban soldiers had demolished their homes and set in fire their crops, orchards and other sources of livelihood.

17 December

Monuments and archaeological sites in Laghman Province in eastern Afghanistan have been badly affected by the two decade-old-war. According to a BBC Persian service, the shrine of Mehtarlam Baba which was built by Mehmud of Ghazna some 1,000 years back in Mehtarlam town. The shrine is now in ruins with apparently no effort in sight of restoring it to its past glory.

given Rs5,000 (100 dollars) and provided with medicine and clothes. The UN hopes to repatriate between 12,000 and 15,000 refugees by the end of this year.

15 April

Japanese girl scout leaders handed out 16,805 peace packs to a large number of Afghan children in three schools in Quetta.

23 April

World Food Programme warned that due to shortage of funds WFP would stop assistance on emergency level by April 30. WFP needs funds to save from starvation some 30,000 Afghan refugees living in Pakistan. Based on a report, some \$16.7 million were required for the assistance of refugees.

MAY

2 May

More than two million Afghan refugees have been repatriated from NWFP and Baluchistan, 1.5 million Afghan refugees are still in Pakistan, said the Pakistani Minister for Refugees.

2 May

An 11-member team of UN international staff arrived in Jalalabad to monitor relief activities there.

6 May

The World Food Programme has approved 65,000 MT of wheat for repatriation assistance to refugees returning from Iran and Pakistan to western Afghanistan. WFP plans to distribute the wheat in two allotments. The first half will be distributed upon the refugee's arrival at their destination and the second will be distributed two months later.

9 May

Kabul and Kandahar will soon have telephone exchanges and the first consignment of the necessary equipment for revival of international telephone system in the area, said Taliban's communication minister Mullah Allah Dad Tabib. Taliban had signed an agreement with an American company, Telecom System International (TSI) in December 1998 for revival of International Telephone System in Afghanistan.

11 May

The UN ended the first phase of an ambitious plan to rid Afghanistan of polio despite disruptions caused by fierce fighting between warring factions. More than 21,000 volunteers and health workers targeted 4.3 million children under the age of five for inoculation through a strategy devised by the WHO and UNICEF. According to the report the UN could not reach Bamyan and Takhar Provinces due to intense fighting between the Taliban and Opposition forces.

17 May

China will build a cement plant in Kandahar. Chief representative and Senior Engineer, China Building Material Industrial Corporation, Luo Feng, said that this would be a one

thousand MT daily production capacity plant based on local raw material. "We have prepared a technical report and submitted it to the Taliban authorities for their consideration, if agreed the plant would take two years to complete from the date of starting of its installation", he added.

17 May

A 6 member team of the UN international staff arrived in Mazar-i-Sharif to start their humanitarian mission.

22 May

Pakistan and Afghanistan signed an agreement to rebuild a 10 kms stretch of road from Jalalabad to Kabul during the current financial year.

JUNE

1 June

The refugees of Nasir Bagh Camp, Peshawar appealed to the UN and other humanitarian organisations to revise their decision and restart humanitarian assistance for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

3 June

The head of the International NGO Muslim Hands, Sahibzada Lakht Hasnain, met Taliban leaders in Jalalabad and assured support for projects in social sectors like education and health. The London-based Chairman of Muslim Hands met Nangarhar Province Deputy Governor, Maulana Sadr-i-Azam and other Taliban leaders and apprised himself of the Taliban policies and achievements.

3 June

The Government of France has donated 7,000 MT of wheat, value US \$ 1.1 million, to Pakistan for distribution among Afghan refugees living in various parts of the country. Out of 7,000 MT of wheat, 5,000 MT will be distributed among refugees under Pakistan Development Project, while Assistance Project for Afghan Refugees in Pakistan will be responsible for distributing the remaining 2,000 MT of wheat.

4 June

To reduce increasing deforestation in Afghanistan, the Office of the UN Co-ordinator called upon the foreign timber industry to boycott all lumber originating from Afghanistan's shrinking old growth forests.

5 June

The Kosovo crisis seems to have cast its effects on Afghanistan as well; as aid to the war-ravaged country has registered a considerable decrease, reported BBC.

5 June

The postal system resumed in Afghanistan under the authority of the Afghan Communications Ministry after remaining suspended for a long time due to lack of proper post system. BBC reported. The head of the Post Section of the

Communications Ministry, Mawlavi Dadullah Malkhi, said that now postal relations have been established between the capital and many of the provinces and post was being delivered from the capital to all provinces except Bamyan.

6 June

Health officials in Kabul have sought help from abroad to handle the problem of rabid dogs amid reports that cases of dog bites are rising. Sher Muhammad Abbasi Stanakzai, Deputy Minister of Public Health, said cases of people being attacked by rabid dogs had risen in Kabul with no proper medicines available in the local hospitals. So far Kabul's request to the WHO and other aid agencies had yielded only verbal promises, he said.

11 June

The Chinese Government handed over a substantial donation of desperately needed relief items for Afghan refugees to the office of UNHCR in Islamabad. The shipment of medicines, blankets, sweaters, shoes and black tea amounting to US\$ 0.363 million reached Peshawar in north-western Pakistan on a convoy of six trucks after travelling down the Karakoram Highway from Northwest China.

11 June

The UNDCP claimed that Taliban authorities have destroyed poppy plants spreading over an area of 400 hectares in three districts of the southern Kandahar Province. Poppy crop was destroyed after an agreement between the UNDCP and the Taliban. UNDCP is working on a pilot project in Afghanistan with a view to ensure complete eradication of the poppy crop.

16 June

The UNHCR team, in a bid to frame a strategy for the coming year on Afghanistan, concluded a detailed visit of the region. The mission, comprising representatives from the Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Norway, Canada, UK and Italy, held detailed meetings with UNHCR and other agencies representatives. It also conducted visits to Herat and Kandahar Provinces and held detailed meetings with the Taliban leaders including Governors, NGOs and the general public to ascertain priorities in Afghanistan.

17 June

Pakistan would construct a metalled road from the boundary of Kunar Province to its Chitral district at a cost of Rs. 700 million, with the objective to have an all weather road link to Chitral, reported BBC.

17 June

Taliban appealed for immediate international assistance to extinguish a forest fire in north-east Kunar Province which has been raging for the last one week and reportedly approaching Pakistan's border town of Chitral. The fire in Kunar Province broke out on 11 June and has engulfed trees over hundreds of hectares and 10 villages and so far four person were killed,

Taliban Ambassador Mawlavi Saeed-ur-Rahman Haqqani reported.

18 June

China has provided Yuan 300 million for the assistance of Afghan refugees. The relief goods were to be provided to those refugees who were returning home from Iran and Pakistan.

23 June

International donors have given assurance that they would continue to fund UN aid programmes for Afghanistan. According to Lakhdar Brahimi speaking at the end of the two day donors conference in Stockholm, the Swedish capital, the donors, however, remain concerned about several issues including human rights and terrorism.

25 June

The UNDCP is to begin poppy cultivation and opium production survey for 1999 in several provinces of Afghanistan, including Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Balkh and Jawzjan.

JULY

4 July

The Taliban issued an urgent appeal for international medical aid to deal with a major cholera epidemic which could hit up to 48,000 people. Minister for Public Health, Mulla Mohammad Abbas, said 6,359 cases of acute diarrhoea had been reported in recent weeks resulting in 55 deaths. The main source of the cholera is human waste in the water system; which was destroyed by two decades of war, he added.

6 July

WHO is stepping up its campaign to eradicate the crippling disease polio by the end of the year 2000 with special focus on Pakistan and Afghanistan. The campaign concentrates on mass vaccinations, or National Immunisation Days, which aim to vaccinate every single child in a specific population on two separate days, a UN announcement said.

10 July

More than a million Afghans will need food aid in the next 18 months because of a dramatic slump in cereal production this year. According to a UN report, cereal production will be down by 16 percent this year and will not exceed 3.24 million MT. The fall in production is due mainly to unfavourable weather conditions, a higher incidence of crop disease and an increasing tendency by farmers to grow more lucrative crops, the report said.

11 July

185 Afghan refugee families voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan with the co-operation of the UNHCR from Karachi and other cities of Sindh, Pakistan. The UNHCR distributed books and other gifts to the Afghan children in

Quetta. It would also provide Rs. 5,000 and 300 kg wheat to every family on their arrival home.

12 July

A delegation of donors visited Afghanistan and held talks with Taliban leaders on a host of issues, focusing on the peace process, human rights and terrorism. The delegation met the Taliban Foreign Minister Mulla Mohammad Hassan and appraised him of the decisions of the Afghan Support Group (ASG) meeting held in Stockholm last month. A total of 16 Afghanistan donor countries, UN agencies and NGOs attended the meeting, which expressed serious concern over the lack of national reconciliation and continued hostilities in Afghanistan.

AUGUST

2 August

The UN suspended humanitarian flights to Kabul in view of the narrow escape of a UN flight at the city's airport.

3 August

Opposition leader Ahmad Shah Masood urged the world to help a quarter of a million Afghans who had taken refugee in Panjsher valley. "They have no shelter and food and we appealed for urgent international aid for these people", Masood added.

9 August

National Commission of Human Rights of Afghanistan (NCHRA) appealed to the world community to help the recently displaced people North of Kabul.

9 August

Canada agreed to help construct highways and airports besides laying a railway line in Afghanistan. A Canadian team, recently arrived in Kabul, held in depth talks with the Afghan Construction Minister and other officials on the construction of Highways, airports, roads, railway lines and other Projects, BBC reported.

12 August

The Government of France decided to extend humanitarian assistance to the refugees and displaced Afghans. The Deputy spokesperson of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs said "we are closely monitoring the evolution of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan following the resumption of fighting and notably the fate of displaced populations from the Shamali Plains" he added.

13 August

UN spokesperson Ms. Stephanie Bunker said that due to recent fighting between the Taliban and Opposition many people have been displaced especially from Shamali plains and battle zone in northern Afghanistan. An estimated 1,870 families comprising 10,000 persons have taken shelter in

Russian embassy a diplomatic compound in Kabul where there is an acute shortage of drinking water and food. Conditions in the crowded compound are less than ideal and the health situation of women and children is of particular concern.

18 August

Pakistan and Afghanistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance co-operation in the field of Telecommunications and Postal system. The MoU was signed by the Pakistan Federal Minister Raja Nadir Pervez and Deputy Minister for Communications Moulvi Allah Dad on behalf of the Afghan Government.

18 August

The Embassy of Japan announced financial support to Afghanistan amounting to Rs. 560.73 million (US\$110,740) through its Grass Roots Assistance Scheme. Japan will extend grants to two NGOs, Guardians and HALO Trust to assist them in the implementation of their projects in the fields of landmine victims.

22 August

Taliban Foreign Minister Mulla Mohammad Hassan Akhund arrived in Islamabad on a four-day visit to Pakistan for talks focusing on Afghan Transit Trade.

24 August

A cholera epidemic has spread through a refugee community in central Afghanistan Panjsher Valley, killing more than 660 people in the last 10 days, most of them children, said Opposition spokesman Mohammad Arif. 250,000 people have fled the bitter fighting in Parwan and Kapisa provinces and are huddled in the Panjsher valley living under trees, as there is an acute shortage of food and shelter, he added.

28 August

The UN will spend US\$53 million during 1999 to cater to the food needs of the people of Afghanistan under WFP, said M. A Sackett, WFP representative for Afghanistan. "Ninety percent of the wheat will be provided by the US followed by Japan, Canada, Netherlands, Finland and other donor countries", he said

29 August

UNHRC has decided to send its special reporter on Women Rights, Komaraswamy to Pakistan and Afghanistan. Taliban have also agreed to allow the visit and said that they would facilitate her trip.

SEPTEMBER

2 September

In response to the UN appeal for Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) of the Shamali valley the government of the Netherlands has contributed US \$7.3 million dollars. The contribution was announced by the government of Netherlands for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan.

4 September

UN spokeswoman, Stephanie Bunker, said a recent mission to the Panjsher valley concluded that around 100,000 people had been displaced by recent fighting in and around the Panjsher valley of northern Afghanistan.

15 September

Opposition called for urgent humanitarian aid for thousands of people in the besieged Dar-e-Suf valley in northern Samangan Province. General Sayed Hussain Anwari, spokesman for the Opposition, said 300,000 people had been rendered homeless because of frequent fighting in the valley over the past ten months.

16 September

The government of the Netherlands and the European Commission have pledged US \$1.222 million dollars in a bid to contribute to the repatriation and integration of the Afghan refugees.

20 September

Pakistan handed over a consignment of 2000 blanket and 1000 tents to the Taliban authorities for the displaced persons of the Shamali plains.

22 September

Afghanistan and Ukraine have discussed ways and means to initiate economic co-operation between Kabul and Kiev, the Taliban official reported. The report added, that a Taliban delegation held talks with the Ukrainian authorities relating to issues of mutual interest and economic ties.

23 September

The Taliban have struck a deal with a Greek firm in relation to the surveying and extraction of oil in Afghanistan. The Taliban Minister for Mines and Industries, Mawlawi Ahmad Jan, said, "we had been making efforts for the installation of a refinery but most of the foreign firms which we contacted preferred explorations and extraction of oil before the installation of refineries". He confirmed that the Taliban authorities had signed an agreement with the Athens-based ECC firm, which also includes investors from Arab countries, who will begin by conducting a survey for oil exploration in south western Afghanistan.

OCTOBER**4 October**

A potential humanitarian disaster threatens tens of thousands of Afghan refugees who have fled the civil war. An estimated 80,000 to 85,000 refugees are living in poor conditions in mosques and schools in the Opposition held Panjsher valley, said Stephanie Bunker, of the UN Co-ordinators office. The situation is 'turning into a potential humanitarian disaster' as winter approaches, with report of early snow in high passes. Calling for free access for UN agencies to bring relief aid to the refugees, Bunker said the UN had supplied some blankets,

food and plastic sheets but the relief was too little for too many.

7 October

Over 500 Afghan refugees from the Azakhel and Mairakachori camps in NWFP returned home. UNHCR provided each family with 399 kilograms of wheat, a cash allowance of Rs. 5,000 and a plastic sheet.

8 October

The UN appealed to Afghanistan's warring factions to allow relief aid to reach thousands of stranded refugees in the north before the harsh winter sets in next month. There is an urgent need to supply warm clothes, food and tents to refugees displaced by the recent fighting, said Erick de Mul, UN Co-ordinator for Afghanistan. But transportation is a problem in many areas because of the mountain terrain and the protracted war. The fighting has forced at least 195,000 people, mostly children, to vacate their homes, he added.

8 October

The US government has donated US \$465,000 to Mine Action Program in Afghanistan (MAPA) to assist it in its efforts to clear thousands of mines posing serious threat to the lives of innocent Afghans.

13 October

The US Consul General David Katz, visited the Afghan NGOs Co-ordination Bureau and discussed rehabilitation of displaced Afghans, reconstruction activities in Afghanistan, and the NGO's role in matters relating to Afghanistan with the board of directors.

16 October

An NGO representative observed that "the UN decision regarding sanctions had not been welcomed by the majority of suffering and war stricken Afghans and was not doing harm to the rulers", observed an NGO representative. The source also held in question the credibility of the world body for facilitating US demands over an issue which does not fit into the UN's mandate.

21 October

Afghan flour prices have risen sharply amid dwindling stocks after Pakistan's military rulers halted cross-border trade in the staple food following a coup in Islamabad, market traders said.

26 October

WFP has approved 201,850 MT of food aid for Afghanistan for the Years 2000 and 2001. WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) for Afghanistan will provide 115,800 MT of food aid in 2000. The programme will start January 2000. In 2000, WFP Afghanistan will introduce a new food - for - education project to encourage completion of primary school for boys and girls and increase enrolment

numbers. This activity will be initially start in Badakhshan Province.

NOVEMBER

1 November

The UN will send at least 3,000 MT of food to Afghanistan's remote Panjsher valley by the end of this month to assist some 65,000 people threatened by a severe food crisis, a WFP statement said.

1 November

The head of UNHCR-Afghanistan, Ahmad Farah, based in Islamabad, described inadequate funding from the international donors as the major impediment to the repatriation of Afghan refugees. It could take another 16 years for repatriating the Afghans from Pakistan, he said.

1 November

The German Government will allocate DM 500,000 for immediate humanitarian assistance to the civilian population and IDPs in Afghanistan. Germany will financially support the ICRC which will continue to provide medical emergency and protection assistance to the victims of the ongoing fighting in Afghanistan.

4 November

The majority of people in Kabul, are facing vulnerable economic conditions due to restrictions on exports from Pakistan's new rulers and presence of tens of thousands of refugees from Shamali valley. Inflation remains high and the prices of basic supplies have increased sharply in the past few weeks.

15 November

The Afghan currency tumbled to a new record low following the US inspired UN economic sanctions. Currency dealers said that 100,000 Afghanis traded for Pakistani Rs 103 (\$1.90).

19 November

Pakistan has agreed to sell thousands of tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan to ease acute flour shortages there. Taliban Ambassador in Islamabad, Mullah Syed Mohammad Haqqani, said, an agreement has been reached to buy thousands of MT wheat from Pakistan and send it to Afghanistan.

24 November

The UN launched an appeal for \$221 million for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, which the UN says is one of the most impoverished nations on earth.

DECEMBER

7 December

The ICRC has opened a new orthopaedic centre in Afghanistan to provide care on the north Afghanistan frontlines. It is the

fifth Red Cross orthopaedic centre in the country which will care for war-wounded and land mine victims across north-eastern Afghanistan.

10 December

Afghan Women Council (AWC) chairperson Sayeda Fatana Gillani has expressed her concern over the condition of Afghan refugees living in camps in different parts of the NWFP. She appealed to foreign donors, international agencies and the government of Pakistan to assist the helpless Afghan refugees especially those who recently migrated from Afghanistan due to severe weather conditions and recent clashes in north of Kabul city.

10 December

More than 120,000 Afghan refugees have returned home this year despite the turmoil in Afghanistan, spokesman for the UNHCR announced.

13 December

Pakistan will provide 10,000 MT of wheat to Afghanistan and a bilateral agreement between the two countries is in process for the regular wheat supply to the country.

14 December

The UN has completed that first phase of an humanitarian operation delivering desperately needed aid to tens of thousand's of refugees in Northern Afghanistan. The emergency supplies were transported from Kabul by five convoys across the frontlines to the Panjsher valley. A second phase to ferry more supplies for around 8,000 families or more than 50,000 people stranded in Panjsher, north of Kabul, would be undertaken soon, said Stephanie Bunker.

14 December

Canada will provide humanitarian aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, reports VOA. A spokesman for the Canadian government said that UN and countries which are providing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan had agreed to continue their aid programme.

16 December

Pakistan Minister for Food, Agriculture and Livestock, Dr. Shafqat Ali Shah Jamot, said that the prevailing wheat shortage in the province of NWFP was because of additional consumption in Afghanistan and smuggling. Pakistan wheat production is sufficient for local consumption and overseas Afghans have been asked to meet food requirements for their homeland from other sources and not to depend solely on Pakistan.

16 December

World Food Programme (WFP) has expressed serious concern over the deteriorating food security situation and the increasing cost of wheat in Afghanistan. The food security situation in Afghanistan, particularly in Kabul, Hazarajat, Central Ghor and Badakhshan, has worsened due to bad

harvest in Afghanistan , market speculations and tightened border control in Pakistan.

19 December

Taliban have announced a reduction in petrol tax for Afghan dealers, Radio Shariat reported. The Special Office of Amirul Momineen of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has issued a decree to ease the difficulties of its citizens. The import of diesel, petrol and kerosene are exempted from one percent tax it added.

21 December

Taliban have decided to end their government's control on import of oil and some other trade goods. They have also signed an agreement with Turkmenistan for the import of electricity, Voice of American reports. An agreement was signed between Taliban Deputy Minister for Mines and Industries, Mawlavi Abdul Salam Zaeef, and the Turkmenistan Deputy Minister for Energy, Abdul Rauf Amani. Under the agreement electricity would be supplied to Faryab, Shibarghan, Mazar-e-Sharif and other provinces of northern Afghanistan.

22 December

Over 4,000 MT of wheat has been delivered to Herat from Kazakhstan, easing the pressure on the food scene in Afghanistan, Taliban sources said in Peshawer. A similar agreement has been reached with Pakistan on the delivery of a further 25,000 MT of wheat, which is expected to be delivered to Afghanistan soon.

27 December

A Special mission of the Afghan government has reportedly completed an important visit to China. The maiden visit to China, after the International sanctions were slapped on the Taliban government, was undertaken by a three member delegation headed by an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maulana Abdul Rehman Zahid. According to the report the Taliban representative, had sought economic aid from the Chinese government as the Taliban are facing tremendous economic problems in the wake of the implementation of the UN on Afghanistan.

MILITARY DEVELOPMENT

JANUARY

11 January

Taliban admitted that they had lost important and strategic positions in Northern Afghanistan. According to Taliban commander Arif Khan, districts of Imam Sahib and Dasht-i-Archi in Kunduz Province were no longer in Taliban control.

13 January

Heavy fighting erupted across the Shakar Darra front line, 25 kilometres north of Kabul, between the Taliban and Opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood. No casualties were reported.

16 January

Taliban Opposition claimed to have taken the township of Yakaolang in the central province of Bamyan. The report added that 11 civilians were killed while the Taliban bombed a civilian area to recapture the area.

16 January

Heavy fighting was reported in Takhar province. According to the report Taliban jet fighters dropped several bombs both on civilian and military sites and no casualties have been reported.

21 January

Taliban Opposition had taken control of Sheerin Tagab and Jumma Bazaar on the main highway in north west of Faryab Province.

24 January

More than 400 Taliban troops were captured and 62 soldiers from both sides were killed as fighting escalated in northern Afghanistan Faryab Province. Heavy fighting continued to rage around the Faryab township of Sheerin Tagab after the Taliban commander Makhtome switched sides to Masood.

30 January

At least 20 Opposition troops including a number of commanders, Saleh Mohammed, Yaqoob, Said Ali Khan, and Abdul Satta, switched sides with Taliban in Siyad district of Saripul Province.

FEBRUARY

25 February

Taliban Opposition captured a key district in central Bamyan Province after fierce fighting with Taliban troops.

MARCH

10 March

Fighting continued in Yakaolang, Bamyan Province, between the Taliban and Opposition. No casualties were confirmed.

18 March

Fighting was reported in the Ghorband valley, Parwan Province between Taliban and Opposition forces.

17 March

Fresh fighting was reported in Sure-Pul Province between Taliban and Opposition forces. According to the report 45 Taliban were killed, 15 injured and another 200 arrested, claimed an Opposition spokesman.

20 March

Fighting was reported in Shomali, 25 km north of Kabul - between Taliban and forces of Ahmad Shah Masood.

APRIL

4 April

Taliban Opposition launched a major offensive against Taliban in Kunduz, Dasht-e-Archi district capturing "Pyanow" area. According to the report fighting is going on and Taliban have been forced to retreat.

7 April

Three prominent commanders from the eastern province of Nangarhar joined with the Taliban. A report said Abdul Mateen Bacha, Haji Abdul Qayum and Haji Abdul Haleem sided with the Taliban.

11 April

Three rockets hit Kabul. No casualties have been reported.

13 April

Fighting blocked a strategic cross-road in Dare-Suf, Samangan Province in northern Afghanistan as Opposition soldiers struggled to gain territory from the Taliban. No casualties have been reported.

17 April

Taliban information Minister Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi said that an Opposition commander Sayed Mirza along with 130 of his men and three tanks surrendered to the Taliban in Baghlan Province.

18 April

Heavy fighting has been reported in Faryab and Khinjan in Baghlan Province. According to the report 30 have been killed from both sides in Baghlan Province.

24 April

The Taliban fighters jets pounded Opposition positions in central Bamyan Province to recapture the Provincial capital. So far the Taliban have made no gains. The report added Hezb-i-Wahdat faction has extended its territory around Bamyan after the Shiite group captured the central city from the Taliban.

April***23 April***

The Taliban has signed its first official protocol to allow Afghan women to work with a foreign aid organisation, said a Taliban official. The protocol between Swiss-based TDH and the Taliban will allow up to 50 local women to work in a child aid programme in Afghanistan.

28 April

The Taliban Opposition has set up its parliament comprising of 160 members, including several women representing all parts of the country. The decision to set up the parliament was taken by Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani and other leaders of the alliance in Parwan Province.

June***6 June***

A conference on Afghanistan opened in Larnaka, Cyprus, to explore ways and means for the solution of the Afghan conflict. Different Afghan groups and individuals from the US and Europe were participating. The participants were hoping to reach an agreement for devising a plan for the settlement of the Afghan conflict.

July***1 July***

Kabul has been linked with the rest of the world through a new satellite based digital telephone system. Nick Peckett, of US based TSI, said the first calls had recently been made to the European end of the link, and were successfully received at a satellite earth station at Winchester in the south of England.

7 July

U.S President Bill Clinton signed an executive order imposing financial sanctions against Afghanistan's Taliban in retaliation for their reported support of Osama bin Laden.

29 July

The US issued a veiled warning to the Taliban saying, "they have chosen a path of confrontation", for which the "US is ready". Issuing a strong condemnation of Taliban's latest offensive in the north of Afghanistan, Assistant Secretary of States, Karl Inderfurth, said it flies in the face of the "Tashqant Declaration". The Taliban were given a choice between

"confrontation or co-operation" and the offensive shows that they want the former and the US is ready to move in either direction, report added.

August***1 August***

The Taliban captured Bagram airbase about 40 kms north of Kabul. Bagram is one of Afghanistan's largest military airbases and the only one that was still in the hands of Ahmad Shah Masood. According to the report two key Opposition commanders, Abdul Hadi Safi and Habibullah, along with 900 fighters surrendered to the Taliban in the town of Najrab in Kapisa Province north of Kabul.

1 August

UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, said the Taliban's use of Pakistani and Arab militants to fight in a civil war could rebound on their countries of origin when they went home. "This is extremely dangerous". Lakhdar Brahimi also added that "thousands of Pakistani militants, several hundred Arabs and an unknown number of Central Asian Islamic volunteers were fighting alongside the Taliban. I think Pakistan, Arab countries and any Central Asian countries with nationals fighting there should ask themselves what are these young people going to do when they come home and the militants drawn to the Taliban strict Islamic code, could unleash problems in their own countries if the Afghan conflict came to an end".

1 August

The Taliban captured Charikar, the capital of Parwan Province, and entered Jabul Siraj and Gulbahar town, 60 kilometres north of Kabul, the stronghold of Opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood. Thousands of people have been killed and more than 300,000 have been displaced, the report added.

5 August

Ahmad Shah Masood staged a spectacular come back to recapture almost all the area. In a night time counter attack Masood forces retook Parwan Provincial Capital, Charikar, Jabul Siraj, Gulbahar, Qarabagh, Mahmud-i-Raqi, Nejrab and Bagram airbase. 1,000 Taliban were claimed to have been killed and over 250 Taliban were captured including a large number of Arabs and Pakistanis.

7 August

Ahmad Shah Masood accused the Taliban forces of forcibly ejecting civilians when they overran the Shamali region. According to the report some 300,000 people had fled fearing Taliban savagery. The report added that a large number of people had been trucked from Shamali to Hesar-e-Shahi camp in Jalalabad.

9 August

One of the biggest religious madrassas "Darul Uloom Haqqania" in Pakistan closed down and others were following suit in NWFP to enable their students to reinforce the ranks of the Taliban in battle against the Opposition. According to the report 2,000 students left for Kabul to join the Taliban.

11 August

The US blocked (US\$500,000) assets of Ariana Afghan Airlines within American jurisdiction. The US administration also barred all American entities or individuals from engaging in any business transactions with the Afghan carrier anywhere in the world. The report said it might slap similar sanctions on other foreign businesses found to be allegedly connected with terrorism. The action, announced by the White House, appeared to be aimed at pressuring the Taliban into handing over Osama bin Laden.

13 August

More than 5,000 students from different religious schools in NWFP left for Afghanistan to reinforce the Taliban in their holy war against the Opposition alliance. Students leaving for Afghanistan also include Pakistani nationals whose families have no objection, said Maulvi Liaqat a Pakistani official in Peshawar.

15 August

The Taliban admitted it was receiving reinforcements from religious schools in neighbouring Pakistan, Taliban spokesman Abdul Hai Mutmaen also admitted the presence of a limited number of Pakistanis in Afghanistan.

15 August

The Taliban admitted burning houses of Opposition supporters north of Kabul, saying they were used for military purposes. The Taliban was waging a scorched earth policy against the villages north of Kabul and forcing

10,000 people out of their homes. The Taliban were intentionally setting homes on fire and told residents to cover the journey to Kabul on foot.

25 August

A powerful car bomb explosion outside the home of Taliban supreme leader Mulla Mohammad Omar in Kandahar, killed 10 persons and caused injury to another 35. The report said Mulla Omar and members of his family escaped the bombing and were safe.

25 August

The UN called upon the Taliban and Opposition forces in Afghanistan to stop recruiting child soldiers to fight in the long-running civil war. According to UNICEF representative for Afghanistan, Louis Georges Arsenault, children as young as 14 were involved in the fighting and some were being sent straight to the frontlines.

29 August

The UN Security Council criticised Pakistan for supporting the Taliban and helping to fuel the recent offensive with weapons and warriors.

September**11 September**

Afghanistan's total production of raw opium for 1999 was estimated to be a record 4600 MT according to the finding of the UNDCP annual opium survey. This is more than double the estimated production of 2100 MT for 1998.

11 September

Thirteen people were killed after a military helicopter transporting civilians crashed between Kabul and Kandahar. The cause of the crash was not known.

25 September

Taliban jets attacked the capital of Takhar Province, Taloqan, and its nearby villages killing 16 civilians and wounding 51 others; while approximately 6,000 troops, including 1,000 Pakistan mercenaries, launched a heavy three point attack from Dasht-i-Archi Imam Sahib and Ishkamish in northern Kunduz Province against the Opposition.

October

6 October

The Taliban warned Tajikistan of dire consequence if it did not stop its assistance to the Afghan Opposition. It has been learnt that a French transport plane carrying necessary supplies to the anti-Taliban forces landed in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, and then transported food items to the Panjsher in northern Afghanistan.

7 October

Nawaz Sharif has asked the Taliban's Supreme Leader Mulla Mohammad Omar to shut down terrorists training camps as it is not acceptable to Pakistan. Nawaz said that in the last week the country has been battered by relentless sectarian bloodletting and more than 30 people have been killed, most of them Shias. He said his government had solid evidence that the sectarian killers received training in Afghanistan. The Taliban have denied the report and said that there are no training camps for Pakistan nationals in Afghanistan.

12 October

A military coup took place in Pakistan on 12 October and the Chief of the Pakistan Army General Pervez Musharraf, announced that Sharif government had been dismissed. The Taliban said that the unfolding coup in Pakistan was an internal matter that should have no bearing on relation between the neighbours.

20 October

The Taliban ruled out any extradition to the US of alleged terrorist, Osama bin Laden, despite the threat of UN sanctions. In a statement to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, the Taliban said "We can't do it at any price as the hand over of Osama bin Laden to US would amount to a betrayal of Islamic principles".

20 October

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution urging all member states to cooperate in combating terrorism, to prevent the financing of terrorist activities, and deny safe havens to all those who plan, finance, or commit terrorist activities. The UN Security Council imposed limited sanctions on the Taliban in Afghanistan to pressure it to hand over Osama bin Laden for trial for the US embassy bombing in Africa. The

measure will go into effect on November 14, giving the Taliban one month to hand over bin Laden to the US.

26 October

The 188 members of the UN General Assembly accepted without a vote the credentials of 133 member states that have so far presented them for the current session, including those of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. A nine member credentials committee and the Assembly plenary accepted the existing Afghan delegation.

27 October

According to a decree issued by the Taliban Supreme Leader, Mulla Mohammad Omar, a massive reshuffle has been made in the Taliban administration. Mulla Noorullah Noori has been promoted to overall person-in-charge of the Northern Zone Provinces. Mulla Biradar was named vice chief of the Afghan Army and head of the country's military air bases. Mulla Rauf Akhundzada was made corps commander for Kabul. Mulla Abdul Salam Rocketi, as corps commander Herat. Mulla Said Mohammad Haqqani, as Afghanistan's ambassador in Pakistan and Mulla Saeedur Rahman Haqqani, has been appointed as Deputy Minister of Public Affairs in Kabul. The report also said that Mawlavi Wakil Ahmed Mutawakil has been named as new foreign minister, replacing Mulla Hasan Akhund.

November

10 November

The UN said, it is increasingly concerned about the failure to stop the war in Afghanistan and repeated grave human rights abuses in the country. The UN special rapporteur, Kamal Hossain, said the violations of human rights which were reported to him by credible eyewitnesses in Afghanistan included forced displacement of the civilian population, deliberate burning of houses, summary executions of non-combatants including women and children, arbitrary detentions and forced labour.

12 November

Unidentified terrorists hit the Pakistan capital, Islamabad, with remote-controlled rockets planted in three vehicles and fired from rocket launchers and apparently aimed at US and UN

establishments causing little damage to property and human life. Six rockets hit the US Embassy and the American Centre. A private security guard at the American Centre received minor injuries. No group accepted responsibility for the rocket attack.

14 November

The Chairman of the Anti-Narcotics High Commission of the Taliban, Mulla Abdul Hameed Akhund, has said that UN economic sanctions on Afghanistan would force the Afghans to once again resort to poppy cultivation which would impact on the entire world. The UN sanctions would compel the poor people of Afghanistan to find other ways and means of managing their livelihood and they would once again increase poppy cultivation, he added.

14 November

UN imposed aviation and financial sanctions came into force against the Taliban in Afghanistan for failing to surrender Osama bin Laden. Taliban Foreign Minister, Wakil Ahmad Muttawakil, appealed to the UN to delay or scrap the sanctions and renewed an offer to talk with Washington, but he reiterated that his government would not hand over Osama bin Laden.

19 November

The Taliban have appealed to the UN Security Council to absolve flights for postal services from its sanctions imposed on the 14 November. The Taliban Communication Ministry has presented arguments to the UN and demanded that the airline be allowed to operate a weekly flight to deliver mail as millions of Afghans are living abroad and the country's telephone network is not efficient. People in Kabul are badly affected and they have to travel all the way to Pakistan to send a letter to their relatives abroad.

18 November

Iran formally opened its eastern borders with Afghanistan to facilitate the transportation of food items to the country faced with UN-sponsored economic sanctions due to the ongoing Osama bin Laden issue. The agreement between the countries allows traders to transport goods to Afghanistan through Islam Qalla.

21 November

As the Iran-Afghanistan border re-opened after staying closed for over a year, Tehran has agreed to re-active its consulate in western Afghanistan's Herat Province. Herat Governor Mulla Khairkhwa said that an agreement on the re-opening of the consulate was reached in talks between the two countries and will promote trade ties.

December

3 December

The World Health Organisation has donated \$50,000 to the Taliban Ministry of Public Health for use in the medical field.

5 December

Over 200,000 Afghan refugees are expected to return to their homes voluntarily from Pakistan and Iran during the course of 2000. Sources in the UNHCR said the number of potential returnees from each country would be 100,000 subject to the conclusion of an agreement between UNHCR and Iran in 2000.

3 December

Millions of impoverished Afghans face the prospect of severe food shortage this winter, the World Food Programme said in Pakistan. Soaring wheat prices, a bad harvest and reduced supplies from Pakistan all have contributed to a worrisome situation in Afghanistan. People blamed UN sanctions that were imposed on 14 November as it furthers the miserable lives of innocent people.

3 December

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil signed a decree blocking all funds, financial resources and assets belonging to the Taliban.

7 December

In keeping with UN sanctions, Kuwait has ordered banks and investment houses to freeze the assets of the Taliban.

7 December

Pakistan has closed branches of Afghan banks on its soil and frozen bank accounts of the Taliban to implement the UN Security Council resolution calling for sanctions on Afghanistan.

7 December

US President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary Clinton while addressing a White House ceremony on Human Rights have decried the atrocities against women by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and urged the Taliban to stop violating the rights of women-folk. Clinton announced that the US government next year will spend at least \$ 2 million to educate and improve the health of Afghan women and children refugees and an additional \$1million in emergency aid for those displaced by the recent Taliban offensive in Afghanistan .

13 December

Some 85,000 children die of diarrhoea every year in Afghanistan, UN officials said during the launch of the State of the World's Children 2000 Programme in Jalalabad.

14 December

Iraqi President Saddam Hussien's special envoy called on the Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar in Kandahar early this month. A high level Iraqi delegation, led by a Turkey-based Iraqi diplomat, held detailed meetings with Mulla Muhammad Omar in Kandahar. According to the report Taliban officials are tight-lipped about the Iraqi diplomats visit to Kandahar and no further details are available about the meeting.

14 December

The US will hold the Taliban responsible for any future anti-American terrorist attacks organised by alleged terrorist Osama bin Laden, the State Department said.

19 December

The Paris conference on "Terrorism in Afghanistan" has strongly condemned Pakistan for interfering in Afghanistan. "The conference discussed drugs smuggling and spread of terrorism from Afghanistan but the stress was laid on the interference in that country". The conference strongly criticised Pakistan, particularly the Pakistan Intelligence Agency, ISI and the Taliban, Peter Thompson, a former US special envoy for the Afghanistan Resistance Forces told VOA in an interview.

19 December

The US government has allowed the supply of medicines to Afghanistan. The members of the UN Security Council are of the view that despite

the sanctions imposed against Afghanistan, supply of medicine is meant for human welfare.

26 December

Five militants hijacked an Indian airline plane from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Air port. The plane was not allowed to land at Lahore airport and thereafter proceeded to Amritsar. After a 20 minute stay there, the plane again left for Lahore where it was allowed an emergency landing. Afterwards it left for Dubai (UAE) and finally was flown to Kandahar in Afghanistan. The hijackers, armed with dynamite, Ak-47 assault rifles, pistols and hand-grenades, killed one passenger apparently for looking at the gunman's face. Several foreign nationals, including eight Nepalese, four Swiss, four Spaniards, one Canadian, one Belgian and one Japanese, as well as 150 Indians , are among the nearly 200 passengers on board. The Hijackers demanded the release of an Islamic cleric Maulana Masood Azhar, from Pakistan who was in 1994 in Indian-administered Kashmir. The hijackers threatened to blow up the aircraft.

31 December

The eight day ordeal of nearly 155 hostages on board the Indian airbus came to an end Friday 31 December 1999 after Indian agreed to released three Kashmiri freedom fighters. The Taliban have given the hijackers 10 hours ultimatum to hijackers to leave Afghanistan and refused to grant the hijackers political asylum.

AFGHANI EXCHANGE RATE IN 1999

The following provides some key average exchange rates on a monthly basis during 1999:

1999	Afs./Rs.	Afs./US \$	Rs./US \$
January	721	37,614.54	54.440
February	803	41,474.95	51.930
March	868	44,936.36	51.890
April	868	41,371.98	52.490
May	806	44,078.7	54.870
June	842	44,179.8	53.610
July	781	42,111.52	54.980
August	813	44,154.63	54.090
September	789	42,961.65	54.260
October	828	45,001.8	54.320
November	862	46,754.88	54.211
December	889	48,263.81	54.330

ACBAR

NEWS SUMMARY ON AFGHANISTAN 1999



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JANUARY 2000

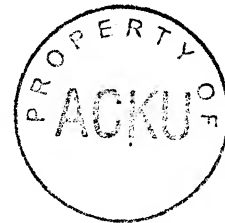
PREFACE

ACBAR has the pleasure to make available the "News Summary on Afghanistan" for the year 1999.

This ACBAR publication, has been produced by extracting the significant events reported in different Pakistani newspapers - The News, Frontier Post and The Nation. No personal or organisational views have been included in this publication.

The important events have been listed under the following topics:

- ① Aid and Economic developments;
- ② Military developments;
- ③ Political development;
- ④ Security matters; and
- ⑤ Other news.



Nancy Hatch Dupree
Executive Director

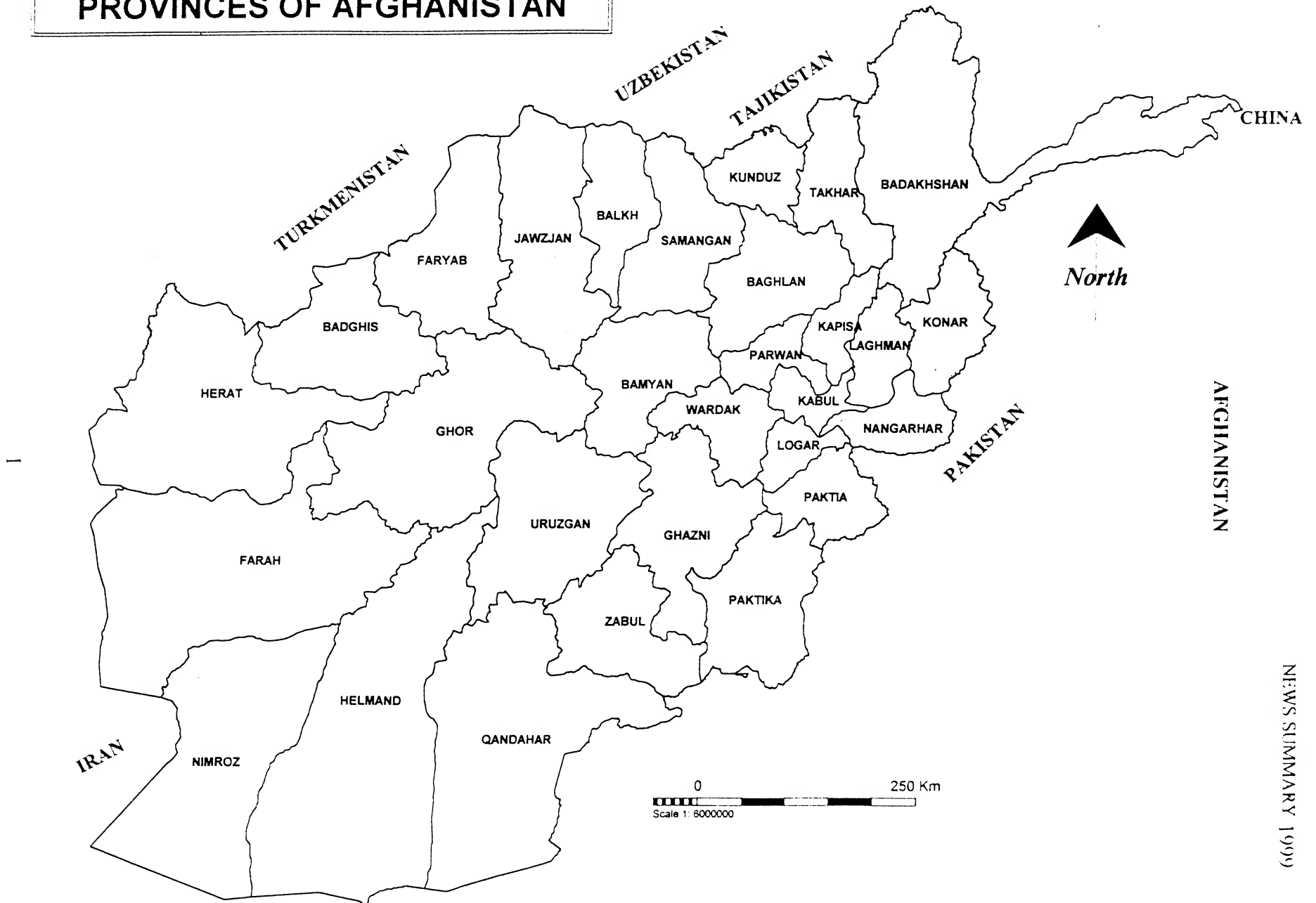


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PROVINCES OF AFGHANISTAN



ABBREVIATION

ACBAR	Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Amnesty International
AIP	Associated Islamic Press
ANLF	Afghanistan National Liberation Front
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAR	Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
IFRCs	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IRNA	Iranian News Agency
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NIFA	National Islamic Front of Afghanistan
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
ODA	Overseas Development Administration - United Kingdom
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OSGA	Office of the Secretary General in Afghanistan
RAWA	Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan
SAFRON	States Frontier Regions Division Government of Pakistan
SCC	Supreme Co-ordination Council
TDH	Terre des Hommes
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance
UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
USA	United States of America
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
VOA	Voice of America
WAFA	
WRC	

SELECTED EVENTS OF 1999

January

12 January

The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Hans Goachim Daerr, presented a donation of fifty five MINEX Mine Detectors to UNOCHA. According to UN officials the detectors will be used by MCPA to support its efforts in mine field survey and clearance.

4 January

Former president of Afghanistan, Sibghatullah Mujaddedi and Chief of National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), Pir Syed Ahmad Gillani; have jointly taken a new initiative for bringing peace to the war-ravaged country. According to the report the new peace efforts have been initiated in the name of the Association for Peace and National Unity in Afghanistan.

5 January

Osama bin Laden spoke publicly for the first time since May 26 1998 in his camp in Khost. He talked to a group of 14 Pakistani journalists, who were taken to Afghanistan by the Pakistan based Islamic militant group Harakat ul Ansar. It was at this press conference that Bin Laden, flanked by his right-hand man Sheikh Taseer Abdullah and Dr Ayman Al- Zawahiri, leader of the Islamic Jihad group of Egypt, announced the Fatwa (religious decree) formulated by him and other ulema for jihad against the US and Israel.

February

3 February

Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth met Taliban representative Abdul Hakkim Mujahid in the State Department in Washington and discussed the whereabouts of bin Laden.

4 February

The Taliban signed a protocol with Japan for the provision of emergency aid for natural disasters which covered earthquakes, floods and epidemics in Afghanistan. The report added that Asia

Medical Doctors Association will establish an office in Kabul to help co-ordinate a response to future disasters.

23 February

UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi paid a one-day visit to Kabul and met the Taliban ruling council, Mulla Mohammad Rabbani, Foreign Minister, Mulla Mohammad Hassan and Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister, Maulvi Abdur Rahman Zahid, on his fresh peace mission. Brahimi's visit to Kabul was aimed at promoting UN peace efforts in the country. The discussion also focused on assurance of security to UN staff and the possibility of negotiations between rival Afghan groups to put an end to the ongoing fighting.

March

14 March

The first UN official Michael Sackett, arrived in Kabul, putting a formal end to a seven-month boycott of the country by UN international staff.

14 March

The Taliban and the Opposition agreed after three days of UN-mediated talks in Turkmenistan capital Ashgabat to share power and work to hammer out a permanent cease-fire. Both sides agreed to form a shared executive, shared legislature and shared judiciary and to release 20 prisoners each through the ICRC. According to the statement released by the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan both sides agreed to continue talks in order to address remaining issues, preferably inside Afghanistan.

25 March

UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Lakhdar Brahimi, flew into Kandahar and held extensive talks with the Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar in a move to secure dates and venue for the next round of talks between Afghan warring factions. Omar accused the Opposition of manipulating the UN-mediated dialogue for political gains and said that Taliban are undecided on the next round of talks with the Opposition.